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ABSTRACT

The folkways and cultural heritage of the Mexican Americans of South Texas are explored in this volume which is designed to provide the student with the opportunity for cultural enrichment, oral language development, and vocabulary expansion. The first chapter deals with "Creencias" which are common beliefs handed down from generation to generation. One of the 23 beliefs listed is "To make it rain soon, hang a horned toad". The second chapter lists customs and traditions associated with baptisms, debuts (quinceanera), weddings and funerals. Faith healing practices are discussed in the third chapter. Photographs show the procedures to be followed in curing such afflictions as "ojo" and several forms of fright (susto) or indigestion (empacho). Don Pedro Jaramillo, a famous faith healer who lived in South Texas in the late 19th century, is also discussed. The fourth chapter discusses the uses of several medicinal herbs, e.g., ajo, alcanfor, anis, canela, and romero. Chapter five lists a number of historical sites in South Texas. Proverbs and traditional riddles, written in both English and Spanish, are listed in the sixth and seventh chapters. The final chapter includes a number of the most popular tales in the Mexican American culture. Many of them are ghost stories or tales of the supernatural. Adventures of Juan Oso, who was half bear and half man, are also given. Each chapter concludes with study questions, suggested activities and a vocabulary list. (DS)

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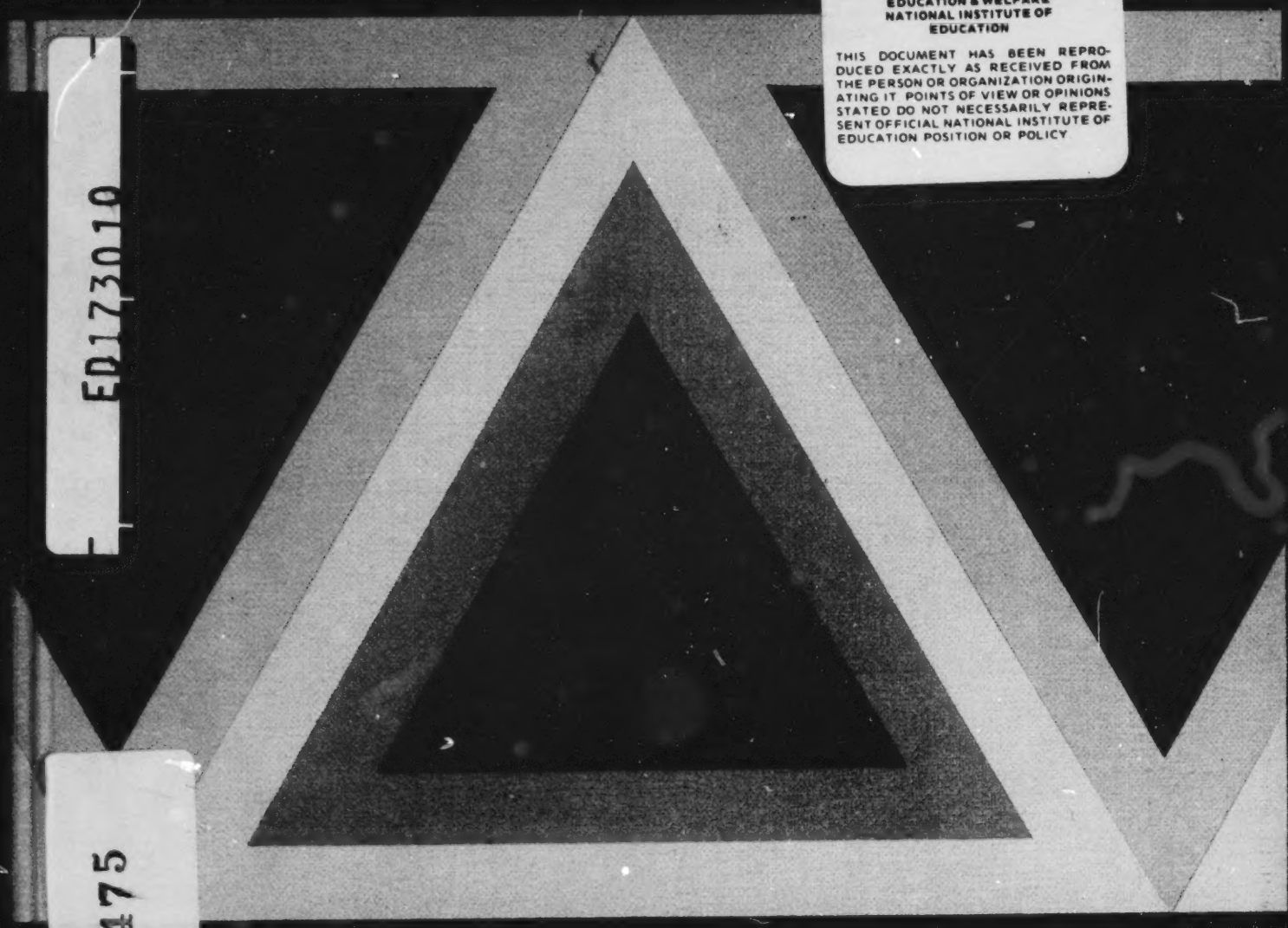

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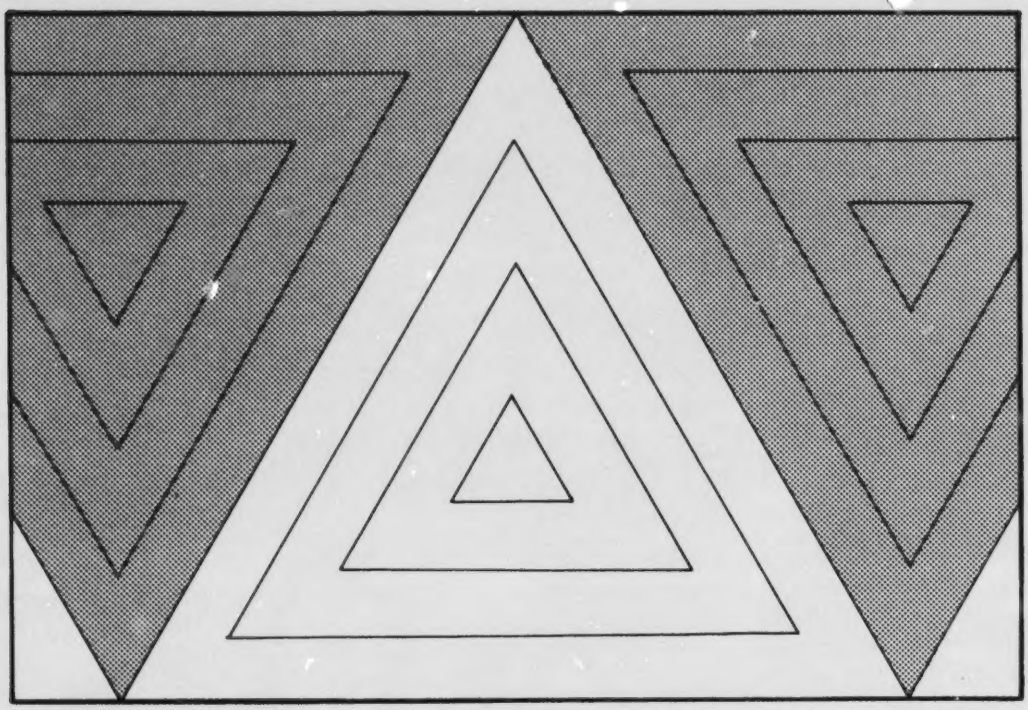

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MIGRANT INSERVICE AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
P.S.J.A. SCHOOL DISTRICT

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The following stories were translated into Spanish by Magdalena Benavides Sumpter:

"The Hairy Hand"

"The Ghost of White Rock"

"An Hacienda Called *La Esperanza*."

"The Lady in White"

"The Ghost Nun"

"A Ghostly Baby Snatcher"

"The Strange Lady"

"The Ghostly Stampede"

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PREFACE

Up until now, very little has been written in school texts about the folkways and cultural heritage of the Mexican American. With this in mind, the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo School District has researched and developed this publication in order to rediscover and preserve a part of the culture of the Mexican American as it relates to folkloric tradition.

This compilation will provide the student with the opportunity not only for cultural enrichment but also for oral-language development and vocabulary expansion.

It is hoped that this endeavor will contribute to a greater pride in and a deeper understanding of the Mexican American's language and culture.

We extend our appreciation to the Texas Education Agency, Migrant Division, for providing support and assistance in the execution of this project.

We also extend our thanks to the members of the committee who wrote and compiled this guide.

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I. Beliefs – Creencias

BELIEFS—CREENCIAS

The purpose of this unit is to familiarize Mexican American students with the folklore which is an important part of their culture.

Creencias are common beliefs which have been handed down from generation to generation. Mexican Americans vary in the degree to which they adhere to their *creencias*, as do people of all cultures.

It is not our purpose to pass value judgments on these beliefs but rather to provide opportunities for classroom discussion in which the students may freely express their own opinions.

In addition, it is felt that the knowledge of ancient traditions provides cultural enrichment by helping preserve the "flavor" of the Mexican American mystique.

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It is bad luck to be the last one to leave the cemetery after a funeral.

It is bad luck to change the time of a funeral.

On the day of a funeral, all mirrors in the house should be taken down or turned to the wall.

If you count the cars in a funeral procession, the number of cars will be the number of days you have left to live.

If you jump over someone, you have to jump back over him or your mother will die.

If you walk over a broom, your mother will die.

If you drop a spoon, you are getting company.

If you put a broom behind a door, your company will leave.

To make company leave soon, put the pestle on top of the stove. (Mortar and pestle: *molcajete y tejolote*.)

If your right hand itches, you will shake someone's hand.

If your left hand itches, you will receive money.

If you cut a little girl's hair on *el día de San Juan* (June 24), the new hair will grow long and beautiful.

If you shake hands and your arms cross, there will be a wedding.

If you are offered a stick of gum from a newly opened package, you should choose the middle piece for good luck.

If you break a mirror, you will have seven years' bad luck. To break the spell, go to the nearest lake or river and throw the mirror over your shoulder.

If you dream of rattlesnakes, you will surely come into some money.

You should leave a house through the same door by which you entered it.

Entering a house through a window brings bad luck. If you do enter through a window, you must leave through the same window.

To lie on a table is bad luck, as only the dead were laid on a table.

To make a storm go away, place the picture or statue of a Virgin or saint face down.

To insure that God will help you, don't look at the priest when taking the host at Communion.

To make it rain soon, hang a horned toad.

To cure a baby's hiccups, place a red string or yarn on his or her forehead.

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QUESTIONS

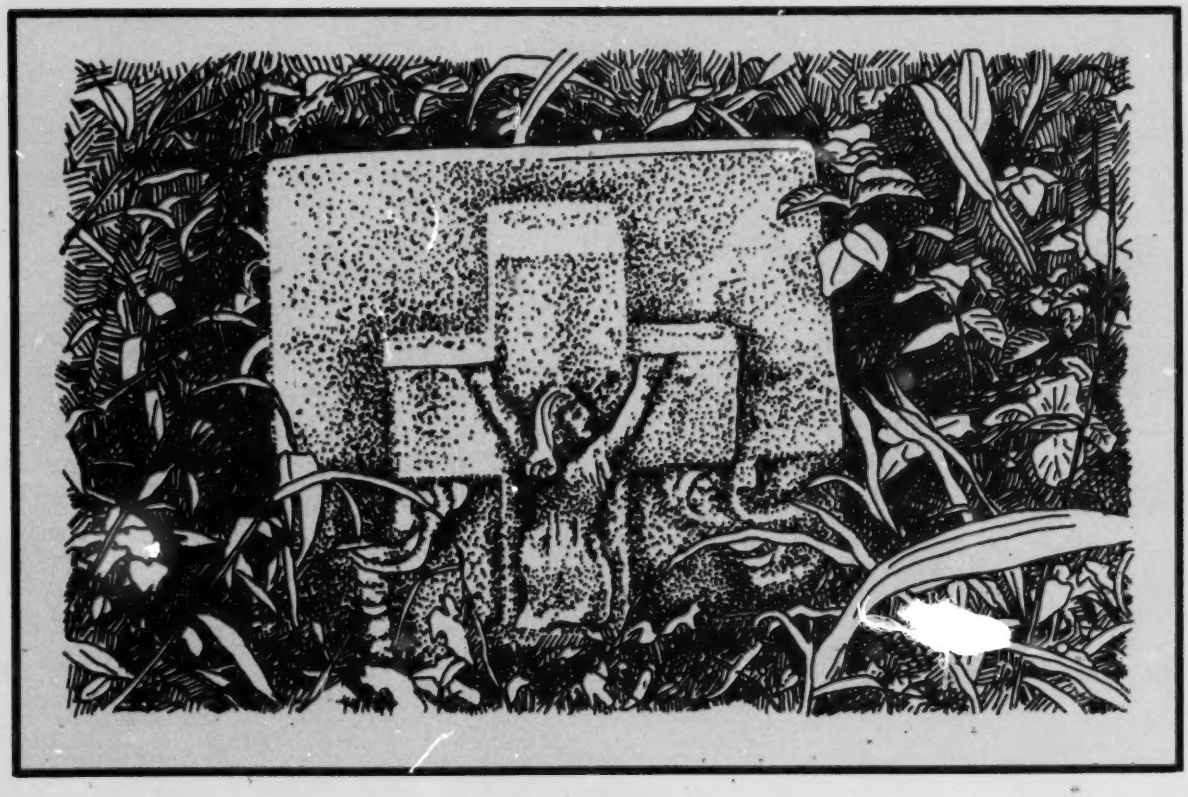
1. Do you think that all superstitions are silly? Why or why not?
2. If you consider that some folk beliefs are valid, on what do you base your judgment? Which folk beliefs do you find it easier to accept?
3. Have you ever heard your parents or other people mention any of the *creencias* listed in this unit? Which ones? Were they spoken of in a manner that implied respect or ridicule?
4. If a baby gets the hiccups while you're around, do you think you might want to try placing a piece of red string or yarn on his or her forehead?
5. Have you had any personal experiences that you think could be explained by any of these *creencias*? Do you think any of these experiences could also be explained more "rationally"?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask the students to speak to their parents, grandparents, or other relatives about superstitions and see if they can add to those listed in this book.
2. If a superstition seems to have the promised result in a particular case, ask the students if they can think of possible rational explanations for the phenomenon.
3. Initiate a discussion on the power of the mind in relation to specific superstitions. Do the students think that a person's belief can influence the outcome in certain situations?

II. Customs and Traditions –

Costumbres y Tradiciones



CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS—COSTUMBRES Y TRADICIONES

People of all ethnic groups have their very own customs, most of which have been handed down from generation to generation. Mexican American customs and traditions are an important part of the culture.

El día de su santo, la comunión, el día de los finados, and *el ofrecimiento de flores al Sagrado Corazón* are some of the traditions that are no longer celebrated as they were in the past. However, other traditional customs—such as those observed at baptisms, *quinceañera* celebrations, weddings and funerals—are still carried on in much the same way as before.

This unit presents those customs that are still in use today and compares present-day observances to those of the past. Lively discussions and dramatizations can enhance historical study and oral-language development.

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THE BAPTISM—EL BAUTISMO

One of the most important ceremonial events during infancy among Mexican American Catholic families is baptism.

The child's age at baptism varies, but the rite is usually performed within a few weeks after birth and almost invariably before the first birthday. It is also performed on adults of any age who are converting to the Catholic faith.

A godfather, *padrino*, and a godmother, *madrina*, are chosen as the child's sponsors for this Catholic sacrament. The *madrina* and *padrino* are usually close friends and sometimes relatives of the child's parents. The baptismal ceremony is performed in church, and the sacrament is administered by a priest. During the ceremony the *padrinos* (godparents) hold the baby in their arms over the baptismal font.

The *padrinos* enter into a special relationship not only with their *ahijado* (godchild), but also with the child's parents. They become *compadres* (coparents).

It is very difficult for people of other cultures to understand the relationship between *compadres*. *Compadres* are special friends not to be betrayed or treated lightly. There is almost a sacred bond between them.

Padrinos are also chosen for a person's confirmation, First Holy Communion, and wedding, but the baptismal *padrinos* are considered the most important. In some instances they see to it that their godchild receives the proper Catholic religious instruction, education, and upbringing.

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Past

In the past, the *padrinos* would usually buy the baby's baptismal outfit. It consisted of a christening gown (*ropón*), which was a long white embroidered or lace gown, and undergarments, such as diapers, undershirt, pants, and diaper pins. They would also buy a toy, a blanket, and an everyday outfit to be worn after the christening rite. The baptismal certificate was paid for by the new *padrinos*.

Another custom was *el bolo*. This was a gift of coins thrown to the people at the door of the church by the *padrinos* after the christening.

The event was usually held in the afternoon, and afterwards, the *padrinos* were invited by the child's parents to share a *merienda* consisting of *pan de polvo*, hot chocolate, and cake. Later in the evening, a dinner was held to which friends and relatives were invited. The dinner traditionally consisted of *cabrito*, *mole*, tamales, tortillas, beans, and rice.

Present

Today, the prospective *padrinos* are expected to attend religious instruction. A baptismal outfit and the baptismal certificate are the only items the *padrinos* are responsible for, unless they want to adhere to the old custom.

During the ceremony, it might be the parents instead of the *padrinos* who hold the baby over the baptismal font. After the event, some parents take the new *compadres* out to eat instead of hosting a *merienda* and a dinner. Despite the changes, however, there are many people who still conform to strict tradition.

VOCABULARY

Ahijado(a): Godchild. the child or adult sponsored at baptism or at one of the other sacraments.
Baptism: The first Catholic sacrament given a child.
Baptismal font: A receptacle for baptismal water, at which the baptism takes place.
Bolo: A gift of coins thrown at the door of the church by the *padrinos* after the baptismal ceremony.
Cabrito: Roasted kid (young goat).
Communion: A Catholic sacrament. The First Holy Communion usually comes after confirmation, when children are about seven or eight years old.
Compadres: Coparents , a term referring to the parents and sponsors of the child, who become very special friends united by a strong relationship known as *compadrazgo*.

Confirmation: A Catholic sacrament. It usually comes after baptism. It can be administered to a young child or to an older person.
Hojarascas (Pan de Polvo): Crumbly, sugar-coated cookies traditionally served at baptisms and weddings.
Madrina: Godmother.
Merienda: A meal eaten in the afternoon, between lunch and dinner. It may be a simple snack or, on formal occasions, an elaborate "high tea."
Mole: A thick, reddish-brown sauce made out of red chili, chocolate, nuts, and various spices, all ground together. It's often served over chicken.
Padrino: Godfather.
Padrinos: Godparents. A man and a woman, not necessarily although usually married to one another, who jointly act as sponsors. The baptismal sponsors are considered so important in their relationship to the child that they are expected to share the duties and responsibilities of the natural parents, especially if, for some reason, the natural parents are not able to properly fulfill their obligations.
Ropón: A christening gown, traditionally a long white embroidered or lace garment.
Sacrament: A rite ordained by Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. What is one of the most important religious ceremonial events during infancy among Mexican American Catholics?
2. At what age is a child given the rite of baptism?
3. Who is chosen to sponsor the child?
4. Who performs the ceremony?
5. Where is the ceremony performed?
6. Which *padrinos* are considered the most important—the ones chosen for a person's baptism, First Holy Communion, confirmation, or wedding?
7. In the past, what did the *padrinos* traditionally buy for their godchild at the time of baptism?
8. In today's society, what are the *padrinos* expected to supply for the baby?
9. Are today's *padrinos* expected to do something that was not required in the past? What?

THE DEBUT—LA QUINCEAÑERA

One of the events most Mexican American girls look forward to in their teens is the *quinceañera* celebration. This is when a young girl reaches the age of fifteen and is introduced into society.

Past

Under the old tradition, the parents and their daughter would begin preparations for the fifteenth-birthday celebration a year ahead of time. The preparations would include choosing the attendants, arranging for the Mass, making a guest list, ordering invitations, ordering flowers for the decorations, preparing a menu for the feast, and—most important of all—designing and making the honoree's dress.

The parents would offer a Mass of thanksgiving in honor of their daughter's patron saint (which is the saint that a person is named after). The girl would choose fourteen of her best friends to be her *damas*. Each *dama* represented a year of the honoree's life, and the honoree herself represented her fifteenth year. Attendants were also selected who were expected to provide specific gifts. The *padrinos de velación* paid for the Mass; the *madrina de anillo* gave the young girl a birthstone ring; the *madrina de medalla* gave her a medal with the image of her patron saint; the *madrina de libro y rosario* presented her with a rosary and a missal. From a Spanish custom came the *madrina de abanico*, who presented the honoree with a white lace fan. The honoree also received a beautiful tiara and mantilla from the *madrina de diadema* and a white satin cushion from the *madrina de cojín*.

The Mass would usually be celebrated on Sunday. The fourteen *damas* lined up first; they were followed by the *padrinos*, then the parents, and finally the honoree. The fourteen *damas* entered the church, which was decorated with fresh flowers, and stood by the pews at the front, half of them on either side of the aisle, awaiting the entrance of the honoree. When the honoree knelt at the altar, the priest came down and blessed her and the gifts her *padrinos* had given her. Then the Mass began.

After the Mass, a dinner was held at the honoree's home. The feast was held under *portales* built especially for the celebration. The menu consisted of *cabrito*, *picadillo*, *mole*, and *arroz*. Fruit punch, lemonade, or tea was also served. After the feast, a dance was held in the patio, to the music of a *conjunto*. The first waltz was danced by the honoree and her father.

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Present

Although today many of the old traditions have been retained, some have been done away with. The preparations still require much planning. The honoree's parents still have to see to the choosing of the *madrinas* and *padrinos*, the arrangements for the Mass, the drawing up of a guest list, the ordering of invitations, the preparation of a menu, and the buying or making of their daughter's dress. The honoree still chooses fourteen of her best friends to be her *damas*, and she also has a voice in helping her parents decide on the other attendants. In some instances, attendants are chosen for almost everything that will be needed for the celebration; there might be *padrinos de arreglo de iglesia*; *padrinos de arreglo de salón*; and *padrinos de música, esclava, guantes,* and *pañuelo*.

The church is still decorated with many fresh-flower arrangements. The priest still blesses the honoree in the presence of her *damas* and attendants.

Instead of having the traditional dinner after Mass, a buffet-style dinner hosted by the honoree's parents is served for the attendants after the rehearsal. After the Mass, the girl and her attendants go to the reception hall where a dance is held in her honor. At the reception, sandwiches, cake, *hojarascas (pan de polvo)*, mints, peanuts, and fruit punch are served. The hall is also decorated with many flowers. After everyone has been served, a presentation is held at nine or nine-thirty. First the *damas* and their escorts (*chambelanes*) are introduced. The *chambelanes* have become a modern addition to the celebration. Then the *padrinos* are introduced, followed by the honoree's parents. The *damas* and *padrinos* form two lines to await the entrance of the honoree. Finally the honoree is introduced. This, of course, is the main reason for the celebration: to introduce the young lady to society. The honoree and her escort dance to the music of an orchestra or a *conjunto*. They dance to a waltz, usually the honoree's favorite. Then the honoree dances with her father. The *damas* and their *chambelanes* dance to a waltz that might have been rehearsed for as long as a month. After this, everyone joins in the dance, which continues until midnight.

After her debut, the honoree is expected to conduct herself as a young lady of society.

VOCABULARY

Arroz: Rice. The basic step in the preparation of rice in the Mexican manner is to fry it with tomatoes and onions before adding water.
Attendants: *Damas, madrinas,* and *padrinos*. They are friends who are chosen to accompany the honoree and to render service to her in the celebration.
Buffet style: An informal way of serving a meal, where guests help themselves to food from a table or buffet (which is a sideboard or counter).
Chambelanes: The young men who serve as escorts for the *damas*. Each *dama* chooses her own date for the evening.
Conjunto: A musical group that includes an accordion and a guitar.
Damas: The fourteen attendants the honoree considers her best friends. Each one represents a year of the honoree's life; the honoree herself represents her fifteenth year.
Debut: The formal introduction of a young woman into society.
Madrina de abanico: The attendant who gives the honoree a white lace fan.
Madrina de anillo: The attendant who gives the honoree a birthstone ring.
Madrina de cojín: The attendant who gives the honoree a white satin cushion to kneel on.
Madrina de diadema: The attendant who gives the honoree a tiara and a mantilla.
Madrina de libro y rosario: The attendant who gives the honoree a rosary and a missal.
Madrina de medalla: The attendant who gives the honoree a medal with the image of the girl's patron saint.
Padrinos de arreglo de iglesia: The attendants who pay for the floral arrangements for the church.
Padrinos de arreglo de salón: The attendants who pay for the decoration of the reception hall.
Padrinos de esclava: The attendants who give the honoree a gold bracelet.
Padrinos de guantes: The attendants who give the honoree a pair of white gloves.
Padrinos de música: The attendants who pay for the *conjunto* or orchestra.
Padrinos de pañuelo: The attendants who give the honoree a beautiful embroidered handkerchief.
Padrinos de velación: The attendants who pay for the Mass.
Patron saint: A patron saint is the saint that a person is named after. Sometimes a child is named after the saint on whose day he or she is born. But when a person's saint's day (*día de su santo*) is on a day other than on his or her birthday (*día de cumpleaños*), that day, in Mexican tradition, is considered at least as important as the actual birth date. Congratulations and gifts are often proffered. It is believed that a person's patron saint is especially concerned with protecting and helping that person.
Picadillo: Hash in sauce.
Portales: The canopies under which the guests sit. They traditionally are handmade thatched roofs of palm fronds and bamboo cane held up by wooden poles.
Presentation: The ceremony at which the attendants and the honoree are introduced.

Quinceañera: A fifteenth-birthday celebration.
Reception: A formal function for the receiving of guests.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the *quinceañera* celebration?
2. What were some of the preparations that were necessary for the traditional celebration?
3. What did the fourteen *damas* represent?
4. What purposes did the *madrinas* and *padrinos* serve?
5. Discuss the differences between the old and the new customs.
6. What do you think of the tradition of formally introducing a young woman into society at a certain age? Do you consider it an outmoded ritual, or do you feel that it can and does perform a useful function?
7. Does your family—or the family of anybody you know—still follow the tradition of observing a person's *día de su santo*? If not, do your parents or grandparents remember celebrating this day when they were younger? If they do, you might ask them when they dropped this custom, and why.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Have the students dramatize the actual *quinceañera*.
2. Have the students bring pictures that their parents or other relatives might have of a *quinceañera* celebration.
3. Ask the girls in the class if any of them have had—or plan to have—a *quinceañera* celebration or some other form of debut. Ask them to share their experiences or plans.
4. If any of the students have ever attended a *quinceañera*, have them discuss their experiences.
5. Remind the students that the custom of formally introducing a young woman into society at a certain age has been practiced not only in Mexico but also in England and the United States and that it still persists today. You might wish to assign some research on the subject.

THE WEDDING—LA BODA

Weddings have always been an important part of a culture, signaling, as they do, one of the most significant events in a person's life. Special rituals and ceremonies surround the acts of courtship and matrimony, and although wedding customs may vary from country to country—and change through the years—their meaningfulness and sentimental value to the participants remain as constant as human nature.

Past

In olden days, there lived in South Texas a beautiful girl named Angelita and a hard-working young man named Enrique. He used to see her walking in the plaza on Sunday afternoons with her family. Enrique managed to speak to her several times, but never alone, for this was against the custom.

When Enrique decided that he wanted to marry Angelita, he told his father about it. Enrique's father asked some of his friends who were respected in the community to visit Angelita's father and get his consent. These friends, who were called *porteros*, proposed matrimony on behalf of Enrique and were told to return in a month for the answer. When Enrique heard that the *plazo*, or waiting period, was only a month, he was happy, for sometimes it was a whole year. The waiting period gave the bride's father time to look into the young man's qualifications and decide whether he would make a good husband.

While Angelita's father investigated Enrique's background, reputation, and social standing in the community, Angelita herself was not allowed to see any young men, least of all Enrique. This custom was enforced in order to avoid the possibility of elopement and the resultant disgrace which would be visited upon the family, as it was known that some girls did indeed elope when they were afraid that their fathers might not consent to the marriage.

Just before the *porteros* were to receive the answer which they were to convey to Enrique's father, Angelita was asked if she was ready to marry. She answered by displaying a hope chest full of handmade linens and needlework which she had done herself.

When Enrique heard that Angelita's father had agreed to the marriage, he was very happy. It was good news indeed that both families were in favor of the union, for harmony among in-laws was important in maintaining strong family ties.

Now the families met together to set the date and make plans for the wedding. Enrique's family brought baskets of the best and biggest fresh fruits and vegetables and other gifts to Angelita's family. In return, the bride's family prepared the finest dishes to serve their guests during the visit.

Enrique brought the *donas* to Angelita. This was money for her trousseau and other expenses. Now the parents of Enrique and Angelita began to call each other *compadres*.

Since the wedding was to be Catholic, Angelita's parents chose *padrinos* from among their closest friends. They needed *padrinos de velación*, to serve as first witnesses; *padrinos de lazo*, to place the ornamental rope symbolizing unity around the couple; *padrinos de arras*, to provide the coins which symbolize prosperity; and *padrinos de cojines*, to place the

kneeling cushions at the altar and to give the bride a bouquet of *azahares* (orange blossoms), the traditional bridal flower.

A few days before the wedding, friends and relatives of the bride began preparations for the ceremony. The men built *portales* of palm leaves and *carrizo* reed tied together to form a thatched roof. This roof was then decorated with fresh flowers and white bows.

The men also began slaughtering calves, *cabritos* (young goats), and hogs. The women of the family were busy baking *hojarascas*, or *pan de polvo*. They also made *pan de huevo*, a delicious bread which was baked from especially prepared corn meal. After cooking the corn, or *nixtamal*, the women carefully removed the sharp part of each kernel by hand in order to make a very fine meal.

The wedding menu consisted of *asado de puerco*; *mole*; *cabrito en salsa*; *cabrito en sangre (fritada)*; *guacamole*; *frijoles rancheros*; rice with raisins; lettuce, tomato, and onion salad; plenty of fresh, handmade corn tortillas; soft drinks, lemonade, and beer. Last but not least were the *molcajetes* of chili sauce.

The great day finally came. Angelita waited for her *primera madrina* to dress her in her gown of white satin and lace and to fasten her high-button shoes. The ceremony was to take place at ten o'clock on Sunday morning. The wedding party formed a procession and walked to church. After the service, the guests returned to Angelita's home and ate a festive noon meal under the *portales*, while a *conjunto* played in the background.

Still the day was not over. At three o'clock in the afternoon the guests gathered for the *merienda* of *pan de huevo*, cinnamon chocolate, and *hojarascas*. After this treat, the dance began in the beautifully decorated patio. Angelita and Enrique danced to "Morir Soñando," the wedding waltz that was traditionally played first. Their parents and the *padrinos* joined in when the second waltz was played.

When the dance ended early the next morning, the guests were served the traditional breakfast of *menudo* and *chicharrones*. Angelita said good-bye to her guests. She knew that after a while Enrique would come back and take her to her new home. In those days, only the very rich could afford wedding journeys, so Enrique and Angelita did not go on a honeymoon trip. But they were satisfied with their beautiful wedding and happy to be together at last.

Present

Some of these colorful wedding traditions are still observed by Mexican American families today.

Although most girls are now allowed to date, many parents impose curfews on their daughters and keep a watchful eye on the young man.

Some modern young couples exchange friendship rings, and later a "promise ring," which is not as binding as an engagement ring.

When a couple wishes to marry, the young man himself may approach the girl's family, perhaps accompanied by his parents. Or he may ask a friend or relative who is respected in the community to represent him.

Most couples today share the wedding expenses, but the groom still usually provides the trousseau. *Padrinos* are chosen by both families. Showers, bachelor parties, and rehearsal dinners are new additions to the wedding activities.

Modern-day bridal bouquets include orchids, roses, and other flowers, besides the traditional *azahares*. Many Anglo wedding customs—like something borrowed, something blue—have been adopted by Mexican American girls of today. Most Catholic weddings are no longer held on Sunday. A short reception or dance follows, instead of the all-day-and-dusk-till-dawn celebration of the past. Refreshments include fruit punch, mints, mixed nuts, *hojarascas (pan de polvo)*, wedding cake, and, sometimes, the groom's chocolate cake.

After the wedding, the couple leaves on a honeymoon trip, with the bride wearing an outfit that is a part of her trousseau. In a few days, the newlyweds return home to set up housekeeping.

VOCABULARY

Arras: Thirteen small gold (or gold-plated) coins, symbolizing prosperity, which the groom gives the bride during the wedding ceremony, usually in a small ornamental basket.
Azahares: Orange blossoms, the traditional bridal flowers.
Cabrito en salsa: Kid (young goat) prepared in a spicy sauce.
Cabrito en sangre (fritada): Kid (young goat) prepared in its own blood.
Carrizo: Bamboo.
Chicharrones: Crisply fried pork skins.
Compadres: Both sets of parents in relation to each other. The bond of *compadrazgo* is considered to exist between a child's natural parents and his/her godparents or in-laws.
Donas: Money for the trousseau and other wedding expenses.
Frijoles rancheros: Beans prepared with onions, tomatoes, and coriander (*cilantro*).
Guacamole: Mashed avocado with hot peppers, onions, and tomatoes.
Lazo: An ornamental rope connected in the middle to form two loops; during the wedding ceremony, one loop is placed over the head of the bride and one over the head of the groom, as they're kneeling side by side to symbolize unity.
Menudo: Small chunks of beef tripe, cleaned and boiled and cooked with *pozole* (hominy), red chili, and spices.

Molcajete: Stone mortar for grinding spices. Used with a pestle (*tejolote*).
Nixtamal: Dry corn kernels cooked in lime (*cal*) and especially processed for making tortillas.
Padrinos de arras: The attendants who provide the thirteen gold coins which symbolize prosperity.
Padrinos de cojines: The attendants who place the kneeling cushions at [illegible]r.
Padrinos de lazo: The attendants who place the ornamental rope over the heads of the bride and groom.
Padrinos de velación: The attendants who serve as first witnesses.
Pan de huevo: Round, sweet buns with a sugar-and-egg topping. Also known as *molletes* or *conchas*.
Plazo: Waiting period.
Porteros: Friends of the groom and his father who convey the proposal of matrimony to the bride's father and carry messages between the two families while negotiations are going on.
Primera madrina: The attendant who dresses the bride on her wedding day.
Trousseau: The bride's clothes and accessories.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that a young man and a young woman are ready to enter into matrimony when they know each other only on a rather formal and distant basis? Do you think today's custom of dating many people better prepares one to choose a mate wisely?
2. Do you think it was a good idea for the bride's father to investigate the would-be bridegroom's background, reputation, and social standing in the community?
3. Do you think a young woman today would agree to leave the decision concerning her marriage in her father's hands? Do you think she should?
4. List some of the preparations that were necessary for the old-time wedding celebration.
5. Do you consider it very important for the families of the bride and groom to establish and maintain harmonious relations?
6. Name the two items that had special symbolical significance in the wedding ceremony. Do you consider symbolical features such as these to be important, quaint, sentimentally pleasing, or totally unnecessary?
7. If you were invited to an old-fashioned all-day-and-all-night wedding celebration, do you think you would enjoy it? Do you think you could stick it out? Would you want your own wedding celebration to last that long?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Have the students dramatize the *porteros'* first meeting with the bride's father.
2. Have the students talk to their parents and grandparents about wedding customs as they were observed in their day and report to the class on their findings.
3. Have the students do some research—and perhaps write papers—on wedding customs in other cultures, such as the African and Japanese. Discuss perhaps subtle similarities as well as obvious differences.

THE FUNERAL—EL ENTIERRO

The life cycle wends its way from cradle to grave, and while human beings in all cultures have evolved special rituals to mark the important events in a person's life, the rituals that are perhaps imbued with the greatest significance are those surrounding death and burial. Throughout the ages, different peoples have said the same last farewell in different ways: "We loved you; we grieve at losing you."

Past

In the past, when a person was very sick and seemed near death, it was the custom for the family to begin to prepare for the upcoming funeral by providing a coffin. If they lived in town and could afford to buy one ready-made, they went by horse and buggy to the nearest place where coffins were sold. If they lived too far, or could not afford to buy one, they made one themselves out of lumber.

As the men made the coffin, the women prepared a black cloth lining for it. They worked fast, knowing that burial would have to take place soon after death occurred.

When the person died, the body was properly dressed for the funeral by *las comadres*, women friends or relatives of the deceased. If the deceased was a single girl who had never been married, she was dressed as a bride. (This is often still done today.) The body was then laid out on a bed, a table, or other flat surface and surrounded by wreaths and lit candles.

Then the wake would begin. For twenty-four hours or more, the body was attended by the mourners, who sat quietly drinking coffee and keeping the grieving family company until it was time for burial. The wake was more than a social convention; it was necessary because sometimes sick people were thought dead when they were only in a deep sleep or coma. This waiting period before burial gave them time to come back to life. All during this time, the family members were relieved of household chores. Cooking was done by friends who came to help and comfort them. Frequent visits to comfort the grieving followed for a long time afterwards.

When it was time for burial, the *padrinos*, or pallbearers, lifted the body and placed it in the coffin. Then, carrying the coffin on their shoulders, they walked slowly to the cemetery; the mourners formed a solemn procession behind them, praying as they went. If the cemetery was a long distance away, there were relief pallbearers stationed along the road to help with the carrying, or sometimes a horse and buggy were used.

The burial was either at the family plot near the house or at the community cemetery. Funerals lasted for over an hour while close friends

took turns giving eulogies and thanking the mourners for their presence.

Everyone who attended the funeral threw a handful of earth into the grave after the casket was lowered. They all waited while the casket was covered and flowers were placed on the grave. Then the mourners returned to the family's home to keep them company for a while and to drink coffee.

If the family was Catholic, a rosary was held each night for nine consecutive nights; the purpose of the prayers was to ask God that the soul of the departed might rest in peace and be forgiven for his or her sins. These nine days of prayer constituted a novena.

When it was not possible to send *esquelas*, formal announcements of death, word was sent by runners on horseback to friends living on nearby ranches.

The family of the deceased dressed entirely in black for a year and sometimes longer, to indicate that they were in mourning. During this period they also did not attend social events—such as parties, dances, or weddings—where music would be played.

Present

Today, when a person dies, the body is sent immediately to a mortuary, where professional morticians embalm it. They also prepare it to be viewed by visitors, who come to the funeral home to pay their last respects to the deceased and to keep the grieving family company before the funeral. In addition, the undertaker helps the family to choose a casket and to make arrangements for the funeral services.

The funeral director has many responsibilities, among which may be the following: notify the newspapers (and sometimes the local radio stations) of the death and funeral; set the hours when visitors may come to view the body; arrange for the funeral and burial services and for transportation to the church and cemetery; attend the services to make sure that everything is done properly.

With modern cold-storage facilities, it is possible to keep a body for several days so that relatives who live far away may arrive in time for the funeral. During this time, if the family is Catholic, a rosary is said every night at the funeral home, where relatives and friends meet to pray for the soul of the deceased.

Often, families request that instead of sending flowers, their friends donate the money to a charity or to a memorial in honor of the loved one. Many modern cemeteries also limit the number of flower arrangements that may be brought to them. Nevertheless, an abundance of beautiful flowers is still sent to most funerals by people who wish to show their love for the one who has died and their sympathy for the family.

After the funeral service, which may be held either at the funeral home or at the church, a hearse takes the body to the place of burial, usually a community cemetery. The family

usually rides in a limousine, and the other mourners follow in their own cars, driving slowly. Pallbearers still accompany the body, but now they only lift the casket into and out of the hearse; the casket is then placed on a wheeled table which is rolled into the church and to the burial place.

At the cemetery, a few words are spoken by the minister or priest to give thanks for the life of the departed one and to comfort the mourners. Immediately after this, the family and friends leave the cemetery, the casket is covered, and the grave is filled in by the funeral-home employees. Thus the family is spared the emotional stress and the additional grief of seeing their loved one actually being buried.

Catholics still pray the rosary for the soul of the departed for nine consecutive nights; the novena is usually held at the home of the deceased's family.

Most people no longer wear black for a year after a loved one has died. Black is never worn in mourning for the death of a child under the age of twelve.

One custom has not changed at all: relatives and friends still gather around the bereaved to help and comfort them.

VOCABULARY

Comadres: Women friends or relatives who prepared a dead body for burial.
Embalm: To protect a dead body from decay by treating it with various chemicals.
Esquela: A formal announcement of death, usually printed within a black border.
Eulogy: A speech in praise of a dead person.
Hearse: A vehicle for conveying a dead person to the place of burial.
Limousine: A large, luxurious automobile; usually it is chauffeur driven, and it may have a glass partition separating the front and back seats.
Mortician (Undertaker): The person whose business it is to prepare the dead for burial and to arrange and manage the funeral.
Mortuary: A building where dead bodies are kept before the funeral and are prepared for burial.
Mourners: Those who feel grief or sorrow; refers especially to the relatives and close friends of the deceased.
Novena: Nine consecutive days of prayer for a special purpose. After a Catholic funeral, the novena consists of a rosary said each day for the soul of the departed.
Padrinos: Persons who carry the coffin; the pallbearers.
Wake: A watch or vigil kept over the body of the dead person until burial.

QUESTIONS

1. Long ago, where did people get coffins?
2. Why was it necessary to bury the dead soon after death before cold-storage facilities were available?
3. Who would dress the deceased when the body was prepared for burial at home?
4. How was a single girl dressed for burial?
5. Why was it necessary, in the past, to hold a wake for at least twenty-four hours? Why are wakes still held today?
6. In modern times, where is the body of a person who has just died taken? Why?
7. What are some of the responsibilities of a funeral director?
8. What is usually requested by the dead person's relatives when flowers are not desired?
9. Why do the mourners usually leave the cemetery before the coffin is buried?
10. Do you think there is a value in funeral customs that goes beyond the social aspect? What is it? Do you think the period of public mourning can help a person psychologically? How?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask the students if they have ever heard their grandparents or anybody else tell about a person who was presumed dead and who came back to life.
2. Ask the students to discuss the reasons for observing a mourning period—dressing in black, not attending social events, etc. Do they consider these reasons valid?
3. You might want to bring to class some books on funeral rites in other times and other cultures: Greek, Roman, American Indian, etc. Or you might want to ask the students to do research on their own on this subject. An interesting discussion could result from a comparison of the ways human beings have developed to express personal grief and respect for the dead, as well as the ways they evolved to make the transition from life to death easier for the deceased (many cultures have considered it necessary to place artifacts in the burial site; many cultures pray for their dead).
4. Ask the students if any of them have ever attended a funeral service. If so, was it the same as described in this section, or was it different? In what ways was it similar and/or different?
5. Ask the students if they would want to work in a funeral home. If so, doing what? If not, why not? If you wish, this topic could develop into a discussion about some people's feelings about death and dead people—seeing them, touching them, being alone with them.
6. You might wish to assign the students the task of writing their own eulogies and/or gravestone inscriptions. This could be an interesting way to lead into a discussion of what achievements in life are really important—both from the individual's and from other people's point of view.

III. Faith Healers - Curanderos

FAITH HEALERS—CURANDEROS

Curandero (or *curandera*) is a Spanish word which means "one who cures," but *curanderos* are not the same as doctors who work in hospitals. The doctor relies on medicine and surgery, but the *curandero* relies on home remedies and faith. Throughout Mexico and the border areas of Texas, these faith healers welcome people to their homes for treatment for such things as *ojo*, *susto*, *desasombro*, *caída de la mollera*, *empacho*, and *latido*. In English, these afflictions would be called evil eye (although this name is not quite accurate), fright, shock, fallen fontanel (or soft spot), severe indigestion, and bad stomachache. The following pages will discuss some of the ailments a *curandero* treats and the methods he uses in treating them.

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AILMENTS TRADITIONALLY TREATED BY CURANDEROS

OJO

Have you ever heard of *ojo*? The word means "eye" in Spanish, but it also has another special meaning: it refers to bad luck that comes because of too much admiration. If you say, or even think, "What beautiful hair that baby has!" you must immediately reach out and touch the baby's hair. If you fail to do this, the baby may become sick, and perhaps lose that beautiful hair, because of your admiration. Material objects as well as people can be affected by *ojo* if the person admiring them does not touch them at once.

The concept of *ojo* might seem to be akin to that of the "evil eye," but it is really quite different. When a person gives somebody the "evil eye," he wishes to cause harm; but the person who brings bad luck, or *ojo*, through admiration does not do it on purpose. He sincerely admires someone, not realizing that his admiration is dangerous.

The following steps outline the most common procedure used to cure a person suffering from *ojo*.

The patient lies on his back. The *curandera* holds an egg in her hand as she makes the sign of the cross over every major joint in the patient's body while reciting the Apostles' Creed three times.

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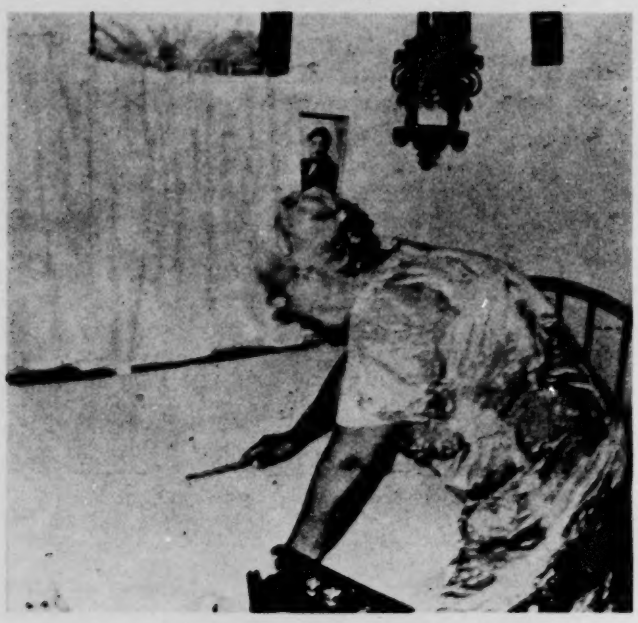
The egg is then broken into a bowl or glass of water, and the receptacle is placed near the patient's head. The egg yolk sinks to the bottom, while the white rises to the surface. If the white becomes solid and forms an oval (an eye-shaped ring), people believe that the patient has indeed been suffering from a case of *ojo* and that he has been cured.

The egg in the bowl or glass is placed under the patient's bed for one night. In the morning, the egg is either buried or flushed down the toilet.

SUSTO

Susto means fright, and a very bad fright, such as that occasioned by the shock of nearly stepping on a rattlesnake or witnessing an ugly fight or accident, is believed to be dangerous to a person's health. When a person is subjected to such an experience, Mexican Americans feel that he or she should be treated for *susto*. If he or she is not treated, the result might be great emotional stress or a bad case of nerves, perhaps even a high fever.

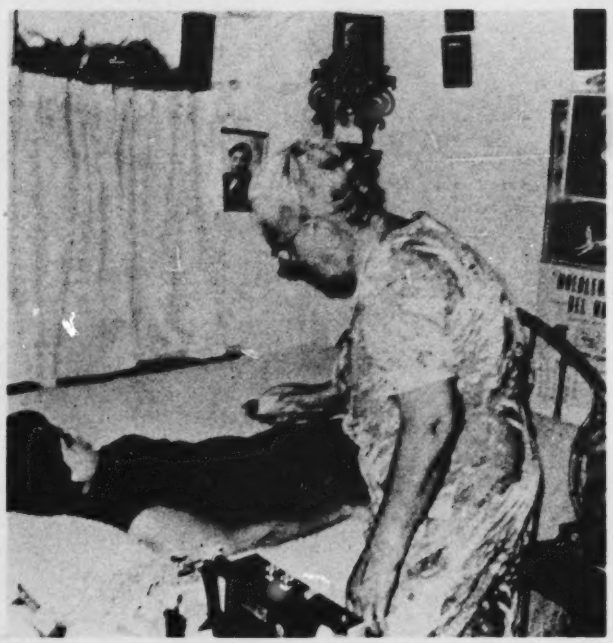
The treatment for the trauma of *susto* is carried out for three consecutive days, usually Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The following steps outline a common procedure for the cure.

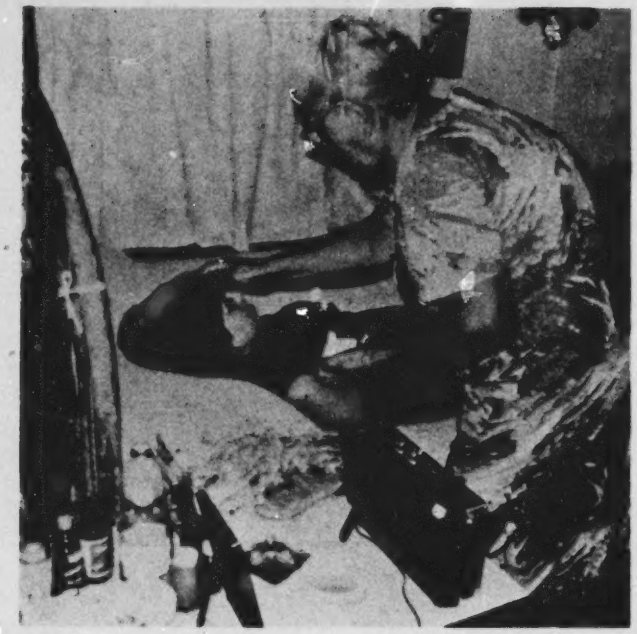


4. The curandera prepares the bed where the patient will lie by blessing it with a knife.

For the first part of the treatment, the patient lies on her stomach with arms by her sides. The *curandera* sweeps the patient from head to toe with cenizo herbs while reciting the Apostles' Creed.

Still reciting the Apostles' Creed, the *curandera* blesses the body joints with holy water. The procedure is repeated, with the patient now lying on her back.





While again reciting the Apostles' Creed, the *curandera* applies holy water to the forehead. She again blesses the body joints with holy water.

The *curandera* reads the *ensalmo*, a prayer for the sick, from her own personal book.

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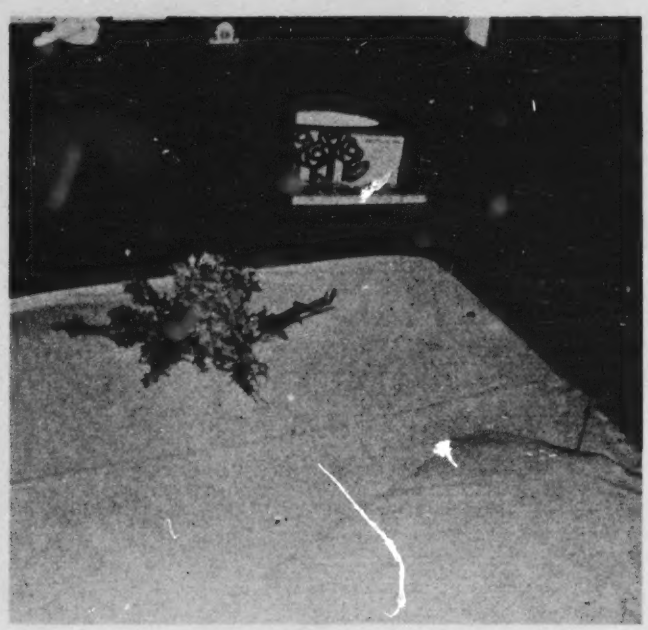
Laying her hands on the patient, the *curandera* blows on the patient's head. She is calling for the patient's spirit to return to the body.

When the treatment is over, the patient drinks a cup of *anís* tea to help settle her nerves. The *curandera* packs the cenizo herbs in a paper bag for the patient to take home with her.



11. The patient is told to put the herbs, in the form of a cross, under her pillow that night. On the following morning, the herbs should be placed at an intersection, a crossroads.

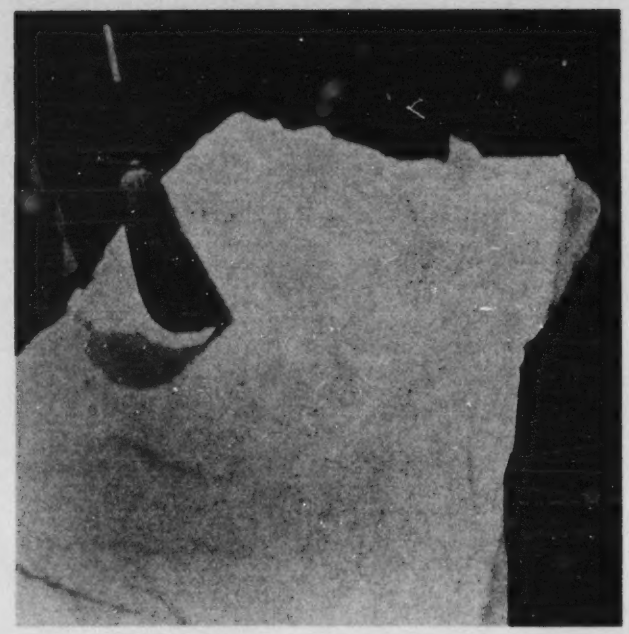
DESASOMBRO

Desasombro is a type of folk illness very similar to *susto*. It could be called *susto* of a higher or more serious degree, and it is believed to result from a severe shock. When someone has gone through a *susto* treatment and not responded favorably, then it is considered advisable for him or her to undergo the treatment for *desasombro*.

The treatment for *desasombro* is performed at eleven in the morning, outdoors, because it is believed that the patient's sweat will expel the evil spirits from his body. The following steps outline a popular method of curing this complaint.

The *curandera* digs four holes in the ground in a diamond shape: one for the head, one for the feet, and two for the hands. The holes are covered with a white sheet.

For the first part of the treatment, the patient lies face down with arms outstretched. He is covered completely with another white sheet.



The *curandera* sweeps the patient from top to bottom with a household broom. While doing this, she recites the Apostles' Creed three times.

The patient turns over and lies on his back for the remainder of the treatment. He is covered again with the sheet.

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The *curandera* again sweeps the patient from top to bottom with a household broom. She recites the Apostles' Creed three more times and adds an *ensalmo* prayer for the sick. She is praying for the return of the lost soul.

After the patient is uncovered and stands up, the *curandera* hits his shadow on the ground. This is believed to bring back the wandering soul.

The *curandera* then drags a piece of soiled clothing belonging to the patient inside the house and to the patient's bed. While she does this she calls the wandering soul by name, and she keeps repeating the person's name until she reaches the bed.

The patient sits on the bed and drinks a cup of *anís* tea to help settle his nerves. He is supposed to leave a little bit of tea in the cup.

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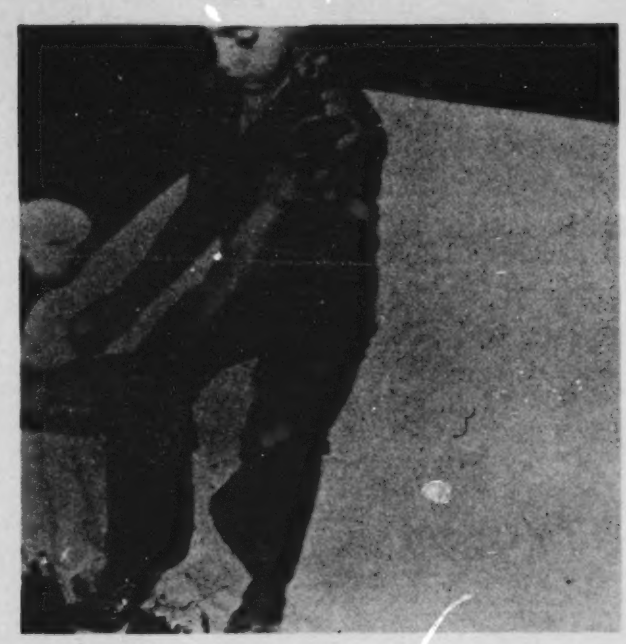
When digging the holes, the *curandera* had saved some of the dirt dug from the ground. Now she mixes this dirt with the tea that is left undrunk. She uses this mixture to make the sign of the cross on all of the patient's joints.



The patient then lies in bed and is well covered until he sweats. The *curandera* sweeps the patient with cenizo herbs while saying the Apostles' Creed three times. This completes the treatment.

CAÍDA DE LA MOLLERA

It is believed that if an infant falls or is handled roughly, he or she can suffer from *caída de la mollera*, or fallen fontanel. The condition can also occur if the baby's bottle is jerked from his mouth while he is being fed.

Caída de la mollera means the soft spot on top of the baby's head has fallen in. This is believed to cause loss of appetite and diarrhea. If the condition is not treated early, it is thought that the baby is in danger of dehydration, which eventually can lead to death.

The person who is treating the *mollera* presses his thumb against the roof of the baby's mouth while the baby is feeding. The soft spot on the baby's head is then supposed to settle back into place.

EMPACHO

Empacho is said to be a bad case of indigestion. Some Mexican American parents do not take their children to a physician to be treated for *empacho*. They either treat them at home or take them to a *curandero*.

The symptoms of *empacho* are stomachache, vomiting, and lack of appetite. In a small child, *empacho* might also cause diarrhea.

The causes for *empacho* vary. Some people believe that a small child may suffer from *empacho* if he swallows chewing gum. *Empacho* can also be caused by eating tortillas that are not well cooked or by eating bread that's still hot from the oven.

Just as the symptoms vary, so do the treatments. One cure for *empacho* is to prepare a mixture of ground beef, onion, mint leaves, and an egg, form it into a patty, place it on a piece of toast, wrap it, and put it on the patient's stomach. This is supposed to be kept on overnight. The patient is also given a cup of warm tea made of *ojasé*. Another remedy for *empacho* is to rub shortening on the patient's stomach and pull the skin on his back until it pops.

EL LATIDO

El latido is a pain in the stomach which comes from not eating properly. It can also be caused by skipping meals. If allowed to continue, the pain may become so intense that the person finds he is no longer able to eat, even when he wants to.

One cure for *el latido* is to have the patient, for nine consecutive days, drink a concoction of fresh raw eggs seasoned with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. After the patient swallows this, he sucks on a lemon to get rid of the bad taste.

VOCABULARY

Anís: An annual herb, the seeds of which are used mostly for making tea.
Caída de la mollera: Fallen fontanel (soft spot). The condition is considered to cause illness or even death in infants if not treated promptly.
Curandero(a): A healer who relies on home remedies and faith.
Desasombro: A type of folk illness that is believed to result from a severe shock.
Empacho: A bad case of indigestion, believed to be caused by swallowing chewing gum, eating tortillas that are not well cooked, eating hot sweet bread too fast, or various other reasons.
Ensalmo: A prayer for the sick; a cure that is achieved by means of incantations or herbal remedies.
Latido: A severe stomachache, caused by not eating properly or skipping meals altogether.
Ojasé: Senna. The tea brewed from this herb is used to relieve emotional upsets and digestive complaints.
Ojo: Sickness or other bad luck believed to be caused unwittingly by admiration of a person or object that is not immediately followed by physical contact.
Susto: A bad fright that, if left untreated, is believed to be dangerous to a person's health, perhaps resulting in great emotional stress, a bad case of nerves, or even a high fever.

QUESTIONS

1. Would you go to a *curandero* for any of the complaints discussed in this section or for any other reason?
2. Do you believe that *ojo* can cause sickness or other harm? Do you believe in the evil eye, the *deliberate* inflicting of harm? Do you think that a person has to be a believer in order to be affected by either of these phenomena?
3. If you were told that you were suffering from *empacho* or *latido*, would you submit to the prescribed treatment? Why or why not?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask the students if they have ever heard of a *curandero* or *curandera* in their home community. Have they ever known or heard of anybody who consulted a *curandero*? If so, with what results?
2. Ask the students if they have ever heard anybody talk about *ojo*. Do they consider that these people are necessarily ignorant or "superstitious"? Or do the students feel that intelligent and "rational" people can perhaps believe in *ojo* and other folk illnesses and remedies?
3. You might want to assign students to do research on other cultures with particular reference to beliefs in faith healing, the evil eye, etc.

DON PEDRO JARAMILLO

The history of folk medicine would not be complete without mentioning the name Pedro Jaramillo. "Don Pedrito," as he is most commonly called, has long been the best known of all *curanderos*.

Even seventy years after Don Pedrito's death, his fame as a faith healer lives on. People from all over Texas—and even from as far away as California—visit his shrine, which is located off the main highway between Falfurrias and Premont.

The following pages present a brief biography of Don Pedrito and a discussion of some of his best-known *curaciones*, miracle cures which have become legendary.

Don Pedro Jaramillo (1829–1907). Called "The Healer of Los Olmos." Born in Jalisco, Mexico. Said to have been cured through faith, then given the gift of healing in a vision. He came to Los Olmos Ranch in 1881. Many came to him because, unlike other faith healers, he claimed no power of his own but said that God's healing was released through faith. He made no charges. Patients gave or withheld as they chose. But whatever was given voluntarily, he often gave to the poor—food as well as remedies. He traveled widely to visit the sick. Hundreds gave testimonials of their healings.

Thus reads the historical marker outside Don Pedrito's grave site. It was dedicated by the Brooks County Historical Survey Committee on March 26, 1972. It was the first historical marker in the state of Texas to be inscribed both in English and Spanish.

Because of his kind and generous deeds to all, Pedro Jaramillo became known as the "Benefactor of Humanity." There can be little doubt of why such an honor was bestowed upon his memory. For twenty-five years, he unselfishly served all the people of South Texas at a time when only one doctor could be found between Corpus Christi and Laredo.

Don Pedrito was born into a peasant family in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Not much more of his life there is known. It is said that God bestowed the gift of healing upon him while he was still living there. This came about through his own suffering when he had been afflicted with a painful nose wound. One night when he was in pain, he went out into the woods to a pool of water; he applied mud to his nose and felt great relief. He then lay down to sleep and was awakened by a voice telling him that he had received the gift of healing.

In 1881, Don Pedrito settled at Los Olmos Ranch, four miles east of Falfurrias. Here, he started to practice his calling. His work began among the families at Los Olmos and the surrounding ranches, but it quickly grew to cover an extent of hundreds of miles.

Don Pedrito made trips on horseback to help those who were too ill or too old to make the long trip to Los Olmos. On one of the trips to San Antonio, it is said that the crowd grew so big that the police had to be called. When the incident was investigated, charges were brought against him for being a medical quack. The charges were later dropped when the authorities learned that Don Pedrito did not ask for money for his prescriptions. In fact, he gave back to the poor whatever voluntary donations were given to him. He would even tell some people to keep their money for their trip home; still others, who had had to borrow money to make the trip, were told to return the money to the one who had lent it to them. And when Don Pedro went on trips, he left groceries to feed the people who would come from far away and wait for him to return. During a severe drought which started in 1893 and lasted for several years, it is said that Don Pedro fed the entire county.

The number of visitors increased when train service reached Falfurrias in 1903. And much of Don Pedrito's work was done by mail. Severiano Barrera, his adopted son, would help him answer the hundreds of letters that were sent with the hope that Don Pedrito would provide a long-distance prescription.

At one time, the Post Office Department in Washington conducted an investigation on the quantity of letters being sent out. The letters being mailed were not equal in number to the stamps being sold. In the multitude of mail Don Pedro received, people would enclose stamps for the return reply. At one time he had barrels of unopened letters and nine hundred dollars' worth of stamps.

There were times when the patient did not even have to state the nature of his illness, for Don Pedrito was credited with having mind-reading power. His prescriptions consisted of simple home remedies such as herb teas, water, fruits, or a salt-free diet. Sometimes he prescribed treatments such as cold baths to be taken in the morning for nine consecutive days. Many people say that he cured ailments which doctors had declared hopeless. Many articles have been written giving testimonials concerning Don Pedrito's cures.

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On July 2, 1907, Don Pedrito became ill and refused medical attention. It was again his nose which was giving him trouble; he died the following day. Before dying, he told Severiano that his death was God's will and he would accept it, but he was going to try to return from the dead. He asked him to unearth the coffin after three days, but this wasn't done.

Don Pedrito was buried in a tiny cemetery near his home. People from all over the nearby ranches attended his funeral on July 4, 1907. Many more came later to offer their prayers when news of his death reached them.

Ruth Dodson had this to say about him in her book *The Healer of Los Olmos*:

It can be said that there has never been another so honored and appreciated among the Mexican people of South Texas as this *curandero*, this folk healer, Pedro Jaramillo. It can also be said that no one else in this part of the country, of whatever nationality, religion, economic or social standing, has done, through a lifetime, as much to try to relieve human suffering as this man did through the twenty-five years he lived in South Texas. He gave to his work the days of his life and the many thousands of dollars presented by those who felt that they had been helped through him.

This man who had come from such humble beginnings had become immortal to all who had faith in him.

Today, seventy years after his death, Don Pedrito's memory lives on. People regard him as a saint, an attitude which he discouraged during his lifetime. His pictures are placed in altars among those of saints. Masses are said for the repose of his soul, and there is a company that uses his picture as its trademark.

Visitors who come to the shrine kneel and pray at his grave. The small brick building is filled with candles, wreaths, fresh flowers, and other items, among them pictures of babies, soldiers, newlyweds, and family groups; crutches and clothing; locks of hair, pigtails, and bridal bouquets. The shrine is regarded as a place of worship by the faithful, many of whom consider their visits pilgrimages undertaken in fulfillment of a promise.

ESQUELA

AYER,

á las 3:15 p. m., falleció en ésta

Don Pedro Jaramillo,

á los 77 años, 10 meses y 15 días de edad.

R. I. P.

Su hijo adoptivo Severiano B. Barrera, poseído del más acerbo dolor, participa á Ud. tan lamentable suceso y le suplica eleve al

HACEDOR SUPREMO

las preces que su piedad le dicte por el descanso eterno del alma del finado, y asistir á sus funerales que se verificarán hoy á las 3 de la tarde en el Cementerio de los Olmos.

El cortejo fúnebre se recibe en la casa mortuoria y se despedirá en el Panteón.

PAISANO, TEXAS, JULIO 4 DE 1907.

FUNERAL NOTICE

Yesterday, at 3:15 P.M., Don Pedro Jaramillo died in this city, at the age of 77 years, 10 months, and 15 days. R. I. P. His adopted son Severiano B. Barrera, grievously mourning, informs you of the tragic event and begs you to pray to the Supreme Creator in whatever way your piety directs you for the eternal rest of the soul of the deceased and to attend the funeral service which will be held today at three o'clock in the afternoon in Los Olmos Cemetery.

The funeral cortege will assemble at the mortuary and will be dismissed at the cemetery.

Paisano, Texas, July 4, 1907.

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DON JUAN AND DON PEDRITO

Don Juan García Barrera was the owner of San Pedro Ranch in Starr County. He was fifty-five years old when the following incident occurred, as told by his granddaughter, Señora Concha García de la Garza (in *The Healer of Los Olmos*).

In the year 1887, Juan García was living with his family in Mier, Mexico. Only one son, Florencio García Canales, lived on the San Pedro Ranch. One day, Don Juan left his home in Mier on horseback with the object of going to his ranch and from there on to Corpus Christi, where he had a case in court. Some men had stolen some mules from his ranch and he was having them prosecuted. He was to travel a long and lonely road.

After he had been on the way for some time and was more asleep than awake, enervated by the heat of the August day, his horse stopped suddenly and began to rear with fright. Don Juan saw the road blocked by a coiled rattlesnake. He made the horse back away with lashes of his whip and continued along his way. After a short distance, his horse stopped again in the same manner and for the same reason: there was a coiled snake in the middle of the road. This happened four or five times.

Finally Don Juan decided to kill the next rattlesnake he saw. When the incident occurred yet again, he got off his horse and approached the snake with his whip in hand, but when he took careful aim to strike, the rattler disappeared and in its place there was only a mound of dirt. Astonished, he remounted his horse and continued the trip to San Pedro Ranch without meeting any more snakes.

The next day, Juan García Barrera resumed his trip to Corpus Christi. He passed by Los Olmos Ranch, where he had relatives. Don Pedrito lived with one of these relatives, but at this time Don Juan had little faith in Pedro Jaramillo. During his visit at Don Pedro's home, however, Don Juan said to the *curandero*, "Listen, old wizard, what does this signify?" And he related what had happened to him with the snakes.

Don Pedrito sat thinking. After meditating for some minutes, he told the man very seriously, "Friend, don't go to Corpus Christi; what you will lose because of the mules will be little compared with what you are going to lose if you continue with the intention of going to Corpus Christi. It is better that you return to your home as quickly as you can." But Don Juan paid no attention to Don Pedrito. He continued on his way to Corpus Christi and attended to his business satisfactorily. On his return, he stayed at his San Pedro Ranch for some days, where he sold fourteen thousand dollars' worth of horses. Then he left the ranch to return to his home in Mier.

Before he reached the Rio Grande, however, some men kidnapped him, putting into effect a plan that they had had for a long time. Don Juan later learned that on a previous occasion when he had left Mier to go to his ranch, these same men had intended to capture him on the road. But at that time, a messenger sent from his home had caught up with him to tell him that one of his daughters had been taken ill with smallpox, and he had quickly returned home without knowing that he had escaped being kidnapped.

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This time, however, there was no escape. The bandits took him, blindfolded him, and kept him hidden while they opened negotiations with his son. They demanded twenty-five thousand dollars' ransom. The son sold the horses, the goats, and all that could be sold from San Pedro Ranch to meet the kidnappers' demands. The ranch was impoverished. Fifteen days passed; on the sixteenth day the son left the money with a rich merchant in Roma to pay the kidnappers' agent. That same day, Juan García Barrera, blindfolded and nearly dead from hunger, was delivered to the home of a relative in Roma. After this experience, Don Juan had faith in Don Pedrito.

TRANSLATIONS OF AUTHENTIC PRESCRIPTIONS

Señor Feliciano, in the name of God, this remedy is for both of them. Each one takes a cup of cumin tea without sugar for seven nights at bedtime.

I received your kind gratuity, for which God will repay you with good health and a good future.

Don Feliciano, in the name of God, take a cup of cold water seven nights at bedtime. Do nothing for the horse; with the grace of God, he will soon recover.

Don Feliciano, in the name of God, your wife and your mother should each take a cup of cold water for seven nights at bedtime.

TESTIMONIALS OF DON PEDRITO'S CURES

A man brought his son, crippled since birth, to Don Pedrito to see whether he could give him a remedy that would help the boy, who was able to get around only by dragging his body with his arms. Don Pedrito told the man that for six nights he should put a wool blanket in hot water, take it out and wring it quickly, and then wrap the boy in it, with his legs perfectly straight. In the morning the father was to unwrap the child, take him by the arms, and hold him in an upright position for no less than five minutes each time. Don Pedrito said that the boy would be well in six days, but that before getting up on the last day he was to have his entire body rubbed with a sheet as warm as he could stand it.

On the seventh day the boy began getting around like a child that was beginning to crawl.

The healer told the father that little by little the boy would straighten his body until he walked perfectly. The boy recovered entirely, and when he grew to manhood he was completely normal.

The daughter of the postmaster in Paisano (near Falfurrias) had a severe toothache and was being taken thirty miles to a doctor to have her tooth pulled. Don Pedrito stopped by for his mail and was asked to do something to ease the pain. His prescription was to take a clove of garlic that had been roasted in hot ashes and put it in the shoe opposite from the tooth that was aching. The shoe was to be fastened and not removed at all during the night.

The father followed the healer's advice but set out on the trip to the doctor anyway. That night when they camped to rest their horse, the young girl laid down and lost consciousness until daylight. Her father woke her up and asked how her toothache was. The pain was gone! They completed the trip and waited to see if the ache would return. The tooth later fell out painlessly, in pieces.

The following story was told to Ruth Dodson by the son of the couple involved, who was a judge in Brownsville:

In 1889 Doña Tomasita, the wife of Don Andrés Canales, became ill of a malignant fever. Two Corpus Christi doctors were consulted, and both said that they had done all they could and all that science prescribed. In their opinion, there was no cure for her illness. A cowboy was sent from Las Cabras Ranch to Los Olmos to get a *receta* from Don Pedrito. Doña Tomasita had lost consciousness and was unable to recognize anyone. The healer said that she should be bathed in unheated water three times, at two-hour intervals. He came to see her the next day and prescribed further treatment. Doña Tomasita recovered and continued in good health until her death.

The following story was told to Mrs. Dodson by an old woman peddler who had heard it from another woman:

A very poor woman went to Don Pedrito and asked for a prescription. He told her that she was not sick, that poverty was her problem. He said that he would relieve her of this burden but that she must not tell anyone about it, neither father, mother, brother, nor sister. And so it was that money came into her possession without her knowing how. Her sister became suspicious and threatened to punish her severely if she didn't tell her how she was receiving the money. She had to reveal that she was kept supplied through the power of Don Pedrito.

The next time she went to her trunk to get the money she expected to find there, there was none. And she never again received money from this source.

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VOCABULARY

Cumin: A plant of the carrot family noted for its aromatic seeds.

Gratuity: Something, usually money, given voluntarily, in appreciation for services rendered.

Pilgrimage: A journey to a shrine or sacred place. A person who prays for a special blessing will sometimes promise to make a trip as a holy obligation to give thanks for the favor received.

QUESTIONS

1. Had you ever heard of Don Pedrito before reading this unit? If so, what had you heard about him and from what source?
2. Have you ever visited Don Pedro's gravesite, or do you know of anybody who has? What impression do visitors receive from the place?
3. Do you believe in faith healing? Do you believe that Don Pedrito was a genuine faith healer, or do you think he was a fraud who managed to deceive a lot of people for a lot of years?
4. If a faith healer suggested certain remedies for you, would you follow his advice? Even if it meant doing something that seemed a little silly?
5. If you believed implicitly in a faith healer's powers, would it bother you if other people thought you strange or accused you of being superstitious? Would you prefer to keep it your secret that you had consulted a faith healer?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. If the students show particular interest in this unit, they might wish to do further research on Don Pedro Jaramillo and other psychic healers, such as Edgar Cayce. The students might also wish to investigate to see if there are local people in their community who are reputed to have healing powers.
2. Ask the students if they know of any place in town which sells any of the products with Don Pedro's picture as trademark. They might wish to do research in their own community and nearby communities. If they do find a place which sells these products, it would be interesting to ask the storekeeper if there's much of a demand for them and who seems to buy them the most—men or women, young people or old people.

IV. Herbs – Hierbas

HERBS—HIERBAS

Herbs are a significant part of the folklore and medicine of the Mexican American in South Texas, and they are widely used even today.

There is a scientific basis for the use of herbs, and about 90 percent of our medicine is derived from plants.

The students will probably already be familiar with a number of plants, and they should be encouraged to bring examples of these to school in order to discuss them, name them, and share their knowledge with the rest of the class.

In the following lessons, several medicinal herbs and their uses are discussed.

It is hoped that the Mexican American student will be interested in learning about some of the cures used by his ancestors—and still used by many Mexican Americans today. Both the preparation of the medicine and the method of treatment are interesting subjects for study.

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AJO—GARLIC

Description: The common *ajo*, or garlic, a basic seasoning ingredient of many Mexican dishes, is believed to possess valuable curative properties. The garlic plant originally grew in Asia.

Uses: The tender buds, crushed in the *molcajete* (mortar) and mixed with brown sugar, are added to a thick sugar syrup to prepare a potent remedy for whooping cough or any persistent cough. Liberal use of garlic in the diet is said to prevent scurvy. A tea or infusion of the garlic bulb is prescribed for daily use in the treatment of stomach ulcers and liver and kidney disorders; it is also prescribed as a means of reducing high blood pressure.

Crushed garlic is applied to relieve the pain if a person is stung by an *alacrán* (poisonous scorpion). This same remedy is used to treat burns and earaches. Three cloves of raw garlic every morning with a glass of warm milk are considered a preventive against tuberculosis.

ALCANFOR—CAMPHOR

Description: *Alcanfor*, or camphor, is an oil that comes from the camphor tree, which is in the laurel family. Camphor is almost transparent. The trees grow tall and have white flowers and green leaves. Most camphor trees grow in Japan and China and on the island of Formosa. There are a few in southern California and the southern states. Camphor is taken from camphor-tree branches by steaming them

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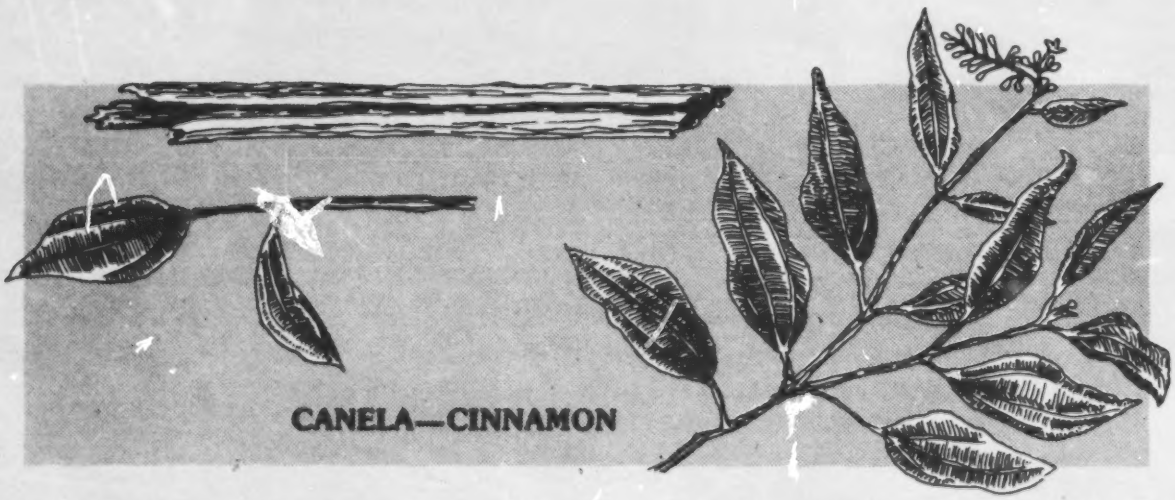
until they give off drops of camphor as if they were perspiring. The camphor is drained and pressed to remove the oil and water it contains; it then forms into whitish crystals. These crystals are purified into liquid form. The oil dissolves perfectly in alcohol, ether, and other oils, but not in water.

Uses: Camphor is used widely as a stimulant and a pain killer for rheumatism. Camphor oil is also used for earaches. For headaches, camphor crystals dissolved in alcohol are rubbed on the head.

ANÍS —ANISE

Description: *Anís*, or anise, is an annual herb grown mainly for its seeds, which have a warm, spicy taste. The anise plant grows wild in Egypt and other Mediterranean countries. It needs warm, dry summers to grow well. About five hundred tons are imported into the United States annually. The seed is the only part of the plant used, and it is used mostly for making tea.

Uses: *Anís*, combined with oregano and boiled with sugar or honey, is used for coughs. Aniseed is also used as a flavoring in cooking.



CANELA—CINNAMON

Description: *Canela*, or cinnamon, is a spice with a pleasant taste and odor that is used in cooking and in flavoring candies. The cinnamon tree grows in the West Indies. An oil is prepared from the leaves, fruit, and root of the cinnamon plant.

Uses: Cinnamon oil is used as a treatment for rheumatism. A tea made from cinnamon strips mixed with sugar is used to stimulate the appetite and to relieve stomach discomforts.

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CEBOLLA—ONION

Description: *Cebolla*, or onion, is a plant that belongs to the lily family and is well-known for its strong taste and odor. The odor is due to a mildly stimulating oil that forms a vapor that escapes into the air when onions are peeled or cut. It affects nerves in the nose connected with the eyes and makes tears flow.

Onions first grew in Mongolia but were cultivated in America as early as 1750. The leading onion-growing states today are New York, California, Texas, Michigan, Oregon, and Colorado, but onions are also grown in many other states as well. Mexico, Italy, and Spain are also noted for the size and quality of their onions. The onion plant is biennial, with small white flowers that grow in rounded clusters. The bulbs are enclosed in a thin papery covering made up of dried outer leaves. The onion plant has few shallow roots.

Uses: Onions are used as a poultice for burns. They are mixed with hot vinegar and used as a chest compress for croup or pneumonia. Fried onions mixed with other seasonings are applied to the stomach for gnawing pains. This same preparation is applied to body sores. For sore throats, crushed onion mixed with honey is recommended.

CEDRO—CEDAR

Description: *El cedro*, or cedar tree, is a large evergreen tree of Africa and Asia that is related to the pine tree. It is a stately tree with wide-spreading branches; stiff needles, one to two inches long, grow thickly on the cedar. They are usually bluish-green, but some cedars have silvery or yellow needles. Several different trees in North America are called cedar trees because their wood has a fragrant odor. The red cedar and white cedar of South Texas are called juniper trees.

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Uses: White cedar is often used to make cedar chests and lead pencils. For malaria, three cups of cedar tea a day are prescribed.

MANZANILLA—CHAMOMILE

Description: *Manzanilla*, or chamomile, is the name of a group of small plants in the thistle family, very much used by Mexican American people for medicinal purposes. The most commonly cultivated chamomile grows in the eastern and central states, where it was brought from Europe. A perennial plant, it grows about twelve inches high and has a slender, trailing stem and many branches. The flowers look much like daisies. The flowers and leaves have a sweet smell but a bitter taste.

Uses: *Manzanilla* tea is recommended for head colds and for colic. When cool, the tea is also used as a treatment for inflammation of the eyelids. Method of preparation: Use one teaspoon of dried flowers per cup of water, bring to a boil, and simmer.

NARANJO—ORANGE TREE

Description: *El naranjo*, or orange tree, originated in Asia and spread to Europe, Africa, and America. It is very abundant in Spain, constituting one of the richest agricultural resources of the peninsula. There are two species: the sweet orange, with forty-five varieties, and the bitter orange, with thirty-five varieties.

Uses: Different brews are recommended for different purposes. A tea made of five grams of leaves per cup of water is taken after meals for digestion. A

beverage made of fifteen to twenty grams of bark from the orange tree per hundred grams of water is taken before breakfast for several days in a row to stimulate the appetite. A tea made from the peel of the bitter orange along with its flower is taken to calm the nerves.

NUEZ MOSCADA—NUTMEG

Description: *Nuez moscada*, or nutmeg, is the kernel of a tropical fruit, widely used as a spice. When the fruit is ripe, it looks like a golden-yellow pear hanging among shiny, gray-green leaves. The tree, an evergreen, grows as high as seventy feet. The trees originally grew in the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, but they have been successfully raised in all of the East and West Indies, Brazil, Ceylon, and India. The pale yellow flowers droop in clusters and look like lilies of the valley.

Nutmeg trees do not begin bearing fruit until they are about nine years old. Each year they produce from fifteen hundred to two thousand nuts.

Uses: The fleshy part of the fruit is often preserved and eaten like candy. A clear oil, called oil of mace, is made from the kernel.

Boiled nutmeg is eaten to relieve indigestion and other stomach discomforts.

OLIVO—OLIVE

Description: *Olivo*, or olive, is an important fruit—also called *aceituna*—that grows in regions near the tropics. People have been growing olives since before recorded history. It is thought that this fruit first grew in the eastern Mediterranean basin. Hundreds of years ago it began to grow wild all around the

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Mediterranean Sea. The Spaniards brought the olive to America, and it reached California in 1769.

Olive oil (*aceite de olivo*) is obtained from crushed olives. It is one of the most digestible of the edible fats. Like other fats, olive oil is a high-energy food. The chief ingredient of olive oil is olein.

Uses: Olive oil is used chiefly in salad dressings and as a frying fat. It is also used in soaps, perfumes, and medicines.

It is said that the Romans used to splash olive oil on their bodies after bathing to give the body limbs more flexibility. Some Mexican Americans use the leaves of the olive tree to make a tea to wash body sores. A cup of this tea can also be taken every morning before breakfast to expel intestinal worms. Method of preparation: Use fifteen grams of olive leaves and tree bark per half-liter of water, bring to a boil, and simmer.

For burns, pure olive oil mixed with egg white is applied to relieve the pain. For coughs, a teaspoonful of pure olive oil is recommended.

ORÉGANO—WILD MARJORAM

Description: The name *orégano* (also "oregano" in English) is given to a group of herbaceous plants which belong to the mint family. These plants grow wild in the Mediterranean region and in Asia. The oregano plant stands one to two feet tall and bears small whitish or purplish flowers. The "common oregano" also grows in the United States.

Uses: The leaves, stems, and flowers of the oregano plant can be used to flavor stews, soups, and dressings.

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The plant is also widely used as a home remedy. Oregano tea is taken—only by adults—before breakfast or well before other meals to expel intestinal worms. A tea prepared with oregano and sugar is recommended for coughs.

ROMERO—ROSEMARY

Description: *Romero*, or rosemary, is an evergreen shrub of the mint family noted for the fragrance of its leaves. It is a native of the Mediterranean region, but it is also cultivated in various places in Mexico. Rosemary grows four to eight feet high. It bears lustrous dark green leaves and tiny pale blue flowers.

Uses: Rosemary yields an oil that is used in perfumes. This plant is used for seasoning as well as for home remedies. The tea is taken after meals for indigestion. Method of preparation: Use ten to twenty grams of the leaves per liter of water, bring to a boil, and simmer.

Rosemary crushed in alcohol (twenty grams of the leaves per half-liter of alcohol) is rubbed on the head to prevent baldness and is also rubbed on the joints to treat rheumatism.

RUDA—RUE

Description: *Ruda*, or rue, is an herb that originated in Europe but is now cultivated in Cuba, Mexico, and other places in the Americas. The herb has yellow flowers which have a strong and pungent scent.

Uses: Our ancestors made much use of rue for cooking and to aromatize as well as to preserve wine.

A piece of the stem of the rue wrapped in a piece of cotton is believed to extract air from the ear and thus relieve earaches.

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SALVIA—SAGE

Description: *Salvia*, or sage, is a somewhat shrubby garden plant of the mint family known for its sweet odor and the flavor of its leaves and stems. It came from the southern part of Europe; gardeners now grow it throughout North America. Sage stands from six to fifteen inches high. It has rough, woolly, grayish-green leaves and a white woolly stem. The flowers may be blue, white, or purple. They grow in groups. The herb is reproduced by seeds or by planting slips or cuttings. It needs much sun and rich soil to grow properly.

Uses: Sage's sour, astringent, and aromatic properties are used in a tea to combat diarrhea in newborn babies. This same tea is also used as a treatment for tuberculosis and is recommended for indigestion, to stimulate the appetite, and to regulate the nervous system. Method of preparation: Use twelve to fifteen grams of the flowers and leaves per liter of water, bring to a boil, and simmer for fifteen minutes.

ZÁBILA—ALOE VERA

Description: *Zábila*, or aloe vera, can be identified by its stiff triangular leaves. They are dark green in color and grow in the form of a rosette from the basal center. The leaves have sharp-pointed "teeth" on the ends very similar to the bill of a sawfish. The plant gives the impression of growing directly out of the ground, as there is no apparent stalk.

Aloe vera has been traced

back thirty-five hundred years; it was used as a symbol of immortality and was painted on the walls of tombs. Throughout the ages, the healing properties of aloe vera have been noted, and as early as 333 B.C. the Greeks identified it as a medicinal herb. No one seems to be certain where aloe vera actually originated, and its home has been recorded as Cape Verde, the Canary Islands, Egypt, and Algeria. The Jesuit priests, who had great respect for its medicinal powers, are credited with bringing it to the New World. *Zábila* blooms in the spring with yellow blossoms on a long stalk that grows out of the center of the plant. Occasionally the blossom has an orange or reddish tint, but it is always basically yellow.

Uses: There are records showing that the Seminole Indians used aloe vera in their surgery. They apparently applied a split leaf to the incision and secured it there to aid in the healing of the wound.

Along the Rio Grande border, housewives and doctors alike began using the plant more than fifty years ago. Housewives used the gelatinlike substance for meat tenderizing. It was also rubbed on the face to remove wrinkles.

Today it is very common among Mexican American people to drink *zábila* in water for arthritis, rheumatism, and stomach disorders. It is also a common medication for insect bites, scratches, burns, cuts, skin irritations, and acne problems.

VOCABULARY

Ajo: Garlic. The plant originally grew in Asia. It is used as a seasoning and to treat coughs, scurvy, stomach ulcers, liver and kidney disorders, high blood pressure, scorpion stings, burns, earaches, and tuberculosis.
Alcanfor: Camphor. The camphor tree, which is in the laurel family, grows in China, Formosa, Japan, Southern California, and the southern states. Camphor oil is made from the branches and is used as a stimulant and a pain killer for rheumatism, earaches, and headaches.
Anís: Anise. The plant grows wild in Egypt and other Mediterranean countries. The seed is used for tea, as a flavoring, and as a remedy for coughs.
Biennial: Occurring every two years or lasting for two years.
Canela: Cinnamon. The tree grows in the West Indies. It is used as a spice, a tea to stimulate the appetite and relieve stomach discomfort, and an oil for rheumatism.

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Cebolla: Onion. The plant belongs to the lily family; it first grew in Mongolia but has been cultivated in America since the eighteenth century. It is an edible bulb that is also used as a poultice for burns and body sores; a compress for croup, pneumonia, or stomach pains; and a remedy for sore throat.

Cedro: Cedar. The tree is native to Africa and Asia; it also grows in North America. Cedar is used to make chests and pencils and as a tea for malaria.

Compress: A folded cloth or pad that is applied to a part of the body to create pressure (in order to reduce inflammation, etc.).

Croup: A condition, affecting infants in particular, characterized by periods of difficult breathing and hoarse coughing.

Infusion: The steeping or soaking (without boiling) of a substance in water or other liquid in order to extract its virtues; the product thus obtained.

Kernel: A fruit seed; the soft inner part of a seed, fruit stone, or nut; a central or essential part.

Mace: An aromatic spice consisting of the dried outer covering of a nutmeg seed.

Malaria: A disease transmitted by certain mosquitoes and characterized by periodic attacks of chills and fever.

Manzanilla: Chamomile. A perennial plant in the thistle family, brought to America from Europe. It is used as a tea for head colds and colic and, when cool, as a treatment for inflammation of the eyelids.

Naranjo: Orange tree. It originated in Asia and spread to Europe, Africa, and America. There are two species, the sweet orange and the bitter orange. Different brews made from the leaves or bark of the tree or the peel of the fruit are recommended for different purposes, such as to aid the digestion, stimulate the appetite, and calm the nerves.

Nuez moscada: Nutmeg. The spice, mace, is made from the kernel of the fruit, and so is oil of mace. The tree originally grew in the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, but is now found in the East and West Indies, Brazil, Ceylon, and India. The fleshy part of the fruit is often preserved and eaten like candy. Boiled nutmeg is recommended for indigestion and other stomach discomforts.

Olivo: Olive. It is thought that this fruit (also called *aceituna*), which has been known and used since time immemorial, first grew in the eastern Mediterranean basin. It was brought to America by the Spaniards. Olive oil is eaten; used in soaps, perfumes, and medicines; applied to the body; and taken for coughs. The tea is recommended for expelling intestinal worms.

Orégano: Wild marjoram (oregano). The plant belongs to the mint family and grows wild in the Mediterranean region and in Asia. It's used as a flavoring; the tea is used as a treatment for intestinal worms and for coughs.

Perennial: Present at all seasons of the year; lasting for several years.

Poultice: A soft mass, sometimes heated and/or medicated, that is usually spread on a cloth before being applied to sores, burns, etc.

Rheumatism: A condition characterized by inflammation or pain in muscles, joints, or fibrous tissue.

Romero: Rosemary. This evergreen shrub of the mint family is a native of the Mediterranean

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region but is also cultivated in Mexico. The plant is used for seasoning, the tea is taken for indigestion, and rosemary crushed in alcohol is used as a treatment for baldness and for rheumatism. Rosemary yields an oil that is used in perfumes.

Ruda: Rue. This herb originated in Europe but is now cultivated in Cuba, Mexico, and other places in the Americas. It is used for cooking and to aromatize and preserve wine. A piece of the stem wrapped in cotton is used as a treatment for earache.

Salvia: Sage. The plant belongs to the mint family; it came from southern Europe and is now grown throughout North America. The tea is used as a treatment for diarrhea, indigestion, tuberculosis, to stimulate the appetite, and to regulate the nervous sytem.

Scurvy: A disease caused by a lack of vitamin C and characterized by spongy gums, loosening of the teeth, and bleeding under the skin.

Species: A class made up of things having characteristics in common and designated by a common name.

Stimulant: An agent (such as a drug) that causes a temporary increase of activity or efficiency; something that rouses or incites.

Thistle: A prickly plant, often with showy flowers.

Whooping cough: An infectious disease that strikes children in particular, marked by a convulsive cough sometimes followed by noisy inhalation.

Zábila: Aloe vera. The healing properties of this plant have been noted throughout the ages; as early as 333 B.C. the Greeks identified it as a medicinal herb. The Jesuit priests brought it to the New World. Aloe vera is used for meat tenderizing, for wrinkles, and for skin irritations of various sorts; taken in water, it is recommended as a treatment for arthritis, rheumatism, and stomach disorders.

QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever heard your parents or grandparents discuss home remedies? If so, which ones?
2. Have you ever been treated with a home remedy for any complaint (earache, cough, indigestion, etc.)? If so, discuss the treatment and the results.
3. If you have children of your own someday, do you think you might try a home remedy first—for diarrhea, burns, or other problems—before calling the pediatrician?
4. Can you explain why onions cause people to cry? Have they ever affected you in this way? Do you know of any way to cut onions without crying?

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ACTIVITIES

1. Occasionally, there appear newspaper stories about home remedies, people who have used them successfully after the more conventional treatments have been tried and have failed, and the scientific bases that have been discovered to substantiate so-called "old wives' tales." You might want to assign a research project on this general subject.
2. The aloe vera plant has recently become "news" again, and there are even lines of aloe vera cosmetics being marketed. You might want to have the class trace the history of the aloe vera plant as far back as possible, giving as much detail as can be found about the various uses it has been put to throughout the ages.

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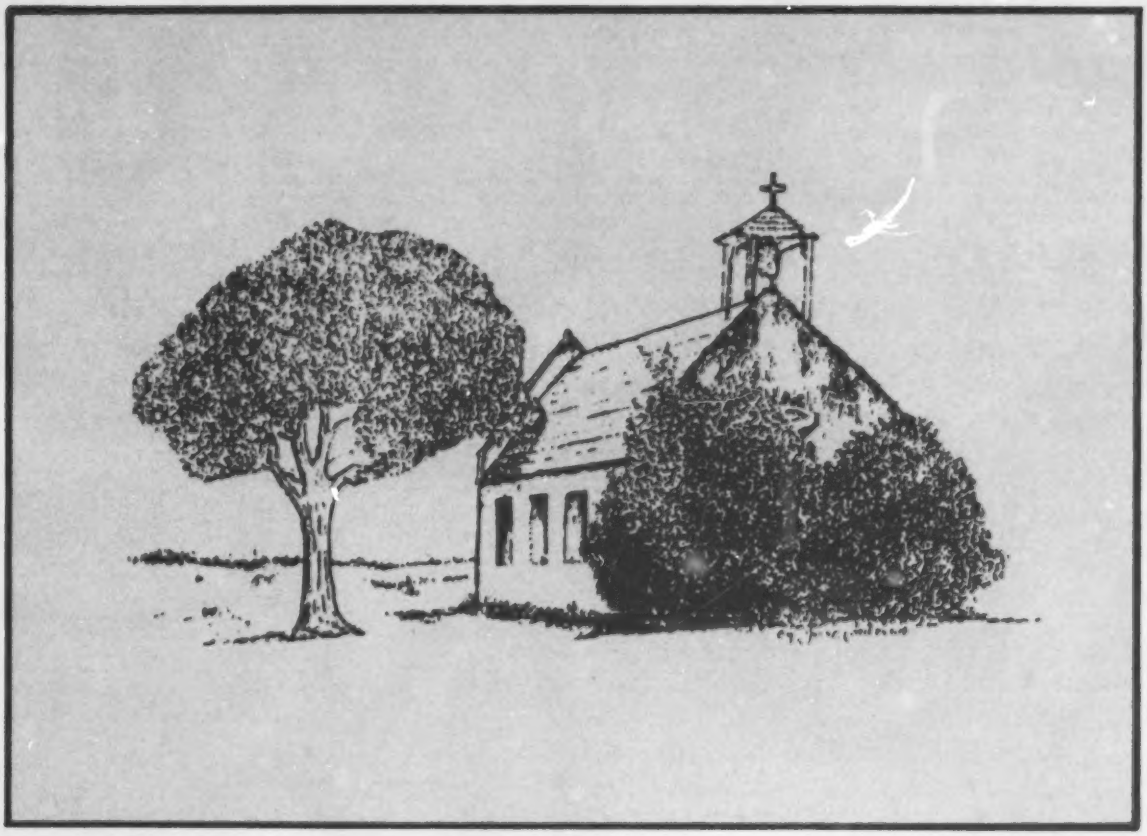
V. Historical Sites -

Sitios Históricos



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HISTORICAL SITES—SITIOS HISTÓRICOS

Almost every community can boast of one or more sites of local interest, sites rich in local history and folklore and meaningful to local inhabitants. This section acquaints us with such places in the Valley in South Texas, places of particular interest to Mexican American children whose ancestors settled that region.

It might also be of interest to the students to visit or learn about contemporary sites—industrial, military, residential, etc.—that are important in their home areas for one reason or another. A study of places of current significance and concern will make the students aware of the fact that "history" is not just something that happened a long time ago—"history" is in the process of being made all around us, every day.

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FORT RINGGOLD

People traveling on Highway 83, passing by Rio Grande City, Texas, often notice the well-preserved remains of a former military post, Fort Ringgold, which was built near Brownsville in 1846, during the Mexican War. The fort was established to protect local settlers from raids by hostile Indians and Mexican bandits, and it was named after David Ringgold, who was killed in the battle of Palo Alto. The original adobe buildings were built near the banks of the Rio Grande River, for adobe bricks were made from mixing clay, grass, and water and placing the mixture in a form to harden in the sun. Adobe was used because the immediate area did not possess big trees that could be used for timber, and at that time, the lumber mills were far away and were not very productive.

In 1869 the present buildings were constructed. The fort had cavalry troops stationed there, and the townspeople, as well as people from surrounding communities, liked to watch the cavalry as they rode out on maneuvers.

The famous Confederate general, Robert E. Lee, then a colonel, came to Ringgold in 1860 to investigate the case of a man named Juan N. Cortina. Some people considered Cortina a bandit, while others thought of him as a hero and a defender of their rights. The part of the fort where Lee stayed is now called the Lee House.

The fort also housed some Texas Rangers in 1875. It remained in use as an army post until 1944. Today parts of the old fort are used as educational buildings for the Rio Grande Independent School District. Some of the buildings still remain as they were in the old days when Fort Ringgold was a famous military outpost.

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HIDALGO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

"Old Edinburg" on the river was the first county seat during the years 1852 to 1886. It was washed away when the river flooded, and the county records were moved to nearby Hidalgo, which served as the county seat for twenty-two years.

When more floods began in 1904, the county fathers and concerned citizens began to think of moving the courthouse again. In 1907 John Closner, county sheriff, and W. F. Sprague, county commissioner, gave the county four square miles of their own land, located in what was then called Chapin, which is present-day Edinburg.

Some time later, a courthouse and a jail were built of white stucco and red tile on the north side of Edinburg's village square. The original courthouse has since been replaced by a new one, but the old jail still stands. In it can be seen a hangman's noose, used only once for the hanging of a man who had killed a husband and wife.

As Hidalgo County grew, a larger jail was needed, and the old jail became a meeting place for civic organizations. It was used in this way until 1970, when the Hidalgo County Historical Society turned it into a museum.

Today we can visit the museum and see books, papers, clothing, jewelry, and other interesting things preserved from the earliest days of Hidalgo County's history, when Indians still roamed the Valley. These articles are loaned or donated to the museum by people who are proud of the county's history and interested in seeing it preserved.

LAGUNA SECA RANCH

The huge Laguna Seca Ranch was famous all over the Southwest from 1870 to the early 1900s for its many acres and fine cattle. The ranch was owned by Macedonio Vela, a descendant of Spanish *conquistadores*.

Macedonio began his career at Tule Ranch, owned then by Juan Cavazos. Macedonio managed the ranch for a number of years, gaining valuable ranching experience. In 1857 he married Mercedes Chapa in Reynosa. They had seven children: Ramón, Alberto, Macedonio II, Jesús, Eloísa, Delfina, and Carlota.

The Vela family came to live at Laguna Seca Ranch in 1867 when Macedonio bought three square miles of land from Salome Balli and John McAllen.

The Laguna Seca Ranch prospered under the Vela family. It had one of the first schools in the area, as well as a post office, named after Delfina, one of Macedonio's daughters. Mr. R. A. Marsh served as schoolteacher and postmaster.

On the Laguna Seca Ranch, the Valley's first citrus trees grew from seeds planted by the Vela children in 1871. The seeds came from oranges brought to the children by the Oblate Fathers who traveled to the ranch. Seven trees from these seeds were still alive and producing recently. A tree planted by Miss Carlota Vela produced oranges until 1951. Historians say that the original seven orange trees on the Vela ranch may be the oldest citrus trees in the state of Texas, and recently a marker was placed near the ranch to commemorate this aspect of its history.

In 1894 the Oblate Fathers, with the help of the Vela family, established a chapel at the ranch. There, services were held for the family and for numerous tenants and their children. Eloísa Vela married William S. Dougherty of Brownsville at the chapel.

The present site of Edinburg was owned by Eloísa Vela until 1909, when she sold 3,300 acres known as El Huisache Ranch to John Chapin. The area was called Chapin before it became known as Edinburg.

Macedonio Vela and his brother Salvador, founder of El Velano Ranch, were pioneers in the finest tradition. Both men and their families worked hard with brain and brawn to carve magnificent empires out of the wilderness. Many of their descendants—grandchildren and great-grandchildren—live in the Valley today. The present owner, Mr. Reynaldo R. Vela, still lives on the ranch.

LA LOMITA MISSION

Five miles south of the town of Mission, Texas, up on a small hill, is a chapel called La Lomita. This little chapel was built by priests and soldiers from Mexico in 1865, and it was from this chapel that the town of Mission got its name.

The Oblate Fathers used this mission as a stopping place when they rode on horseback from village to village to perform baptisms, communions, weddings, and funerals.

La Lomita still has its original bricks and foundation. An outdoor oven which was used by the padres and the early settlers still stands on the mission grounds Inside the mission is a grotto with a miniature statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, visited by those in need of healing.

Also on the grounds is a much larger building which was used as a seminary for training priests until several years ago. At present, this building is in need of repair and not in use.

LA SAL DEL REY

La Sal del Rey is a lake bed of salt which lies north of Edinburg, near the community of San Manuel. The Spanish name means "King's Salt," because it was owned by the king of Spain when the first settlers came to Texas. While outwardly it looks like an ordinary lake, the bottom is covered with snow-white salt crystals. The lake is one of the natural wonders of our continent, because any quantity of salt removed from it replaces itself within twenty-four hours, which makes it different from all other salt lakes or mines.

La Sal del Rey is about one mile long, five miles in circumference, and three feet deep. It supplied salt to the Indians before the Spanish discovery of it in 1687, and by 1730, Mexican oxcarts were carrying salt from the lake to Padre Island for shipment to Spain. After a hundred years of providing salt for Spain, Mexico, and the Rio Grande Valley, the lake became an important source of salt for Confederate troops during the Civil War.

The salt from this lake is of excellent quality for packing meat and curing animal hides. But with modern methods of mining and marketing salt, the lake is no longer used as a source of that commodity. Today it stands alone in the middle of acres of ranchland, and except for an occasional tourist or historian interested in the landmarks of this area, it is hardly ever visited.

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SAN JUAN SHRINE

In 1970 a small plane crashed into the Church of Our Lady of San Juan, causing it to burst into flames and destroying the whole sanctuary. Amazingly, forty priests, fifty worshippers, and about a hundred children from the parish school escaped injury. The Virgin and the Blessed Sacrament were also spared. Before its destruction, the shrine of La Virgen de San Juan in San Juan, Texas, was considered one of the most beautiful in the United States. It was visited each year by over forty thousand pilgrims, who came to pray to the Virgin. The famous statue of Our Lady and the church which housed it have an interesting history.

It begins in the year 1623, when Spanish missionaries placed a small image of Our Lady in an adobe shrine in the village of San Juan de los Lagos, Mexico. In 1923, when a family of traveling acrobats stopped there to give a performance, one of the daughters fell on some pointed daggers during rehearsal and was killed. While her body was being prepared for burial, an Indian woman came in carrying the image of the Virgin and begged that it be placed upon the child's body while a prayer was offered. When this was done, the girl was miraculously restored to life.

Later, Mexican Americans of the Rio Grande Valley began traveling the 525 miles to San Juan de los Lagos, Mexico, to pray to the Virgin. Because the trip was long, dangerous, and expensive, a priest in Pharr, Texas, decided to have a replica of the image of La Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos made for a small church in San Juan, Texas. When the replica was finished, Father José Azpiazu drove to Mexico with two young men who were in the church choir to pick up the statue and bring it to Texas. As they were returning, their car plunged over a precipice, but it came to rest on a large rock only fifteen feet below the road, and the passengers were uninjured. Grateful for what he considered a miracle, Father José encouraged the people of his parish to build a beautiful shrine for Our Lady of San Juan in the Rio Grande Valley. People came from far and near to see this church.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel it is worthwhile to preserve old buildings and other historical sites? Why or why not?
2. Do you feel that a sense of history is something that should be inculcated and developed in each individual? Do you feel it would make you a better citizen if you felt a sense of pride in your community's history? Why or why not?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. If at all possible, it would be interesting to organize field trips to local historical sites. The students could do preliminary research on each site before visiting it.
2. The students might wish to draw or photograph old buildings, churches, ranches, factories, colleges, etc., and put together a "visitor's handbook" that could serve as a guide to people new to the district or those residents who are not aware of historically and/or currently significant places in their community.

VI. Proverbs – Dichos

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PROVERBS—DICHOS

Note: The English version of each *dicho* is not necessarily a literal translation; rather, the purpose has been to give the "idea" of the saying. It will be noted that many of the *dichos* have virtually exact counterparts in English.

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1. *Quien mucho abarca, poco aprieta.*
   Don't bite off more than you can chew.
2. *Hablando del rey de Roma, mira quien se asoma.*
   Speaking of the devil, look who's here.
3. *No te ahogues en un vaso de agua.*
   Don't get excited over little things.
4. *En tierras de ciegos, el tuerto es rey.*
   In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.
5. *Perro ladrador, poco mordedor.*
   His bark is worse than his bite.
6. *Cuéntale tus penas a quien te las puede remediar.*
   Tell your troubles to someone who can help you. (Why tell me?)
7. *Del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho.*
   It's easier said than done.
8. *Hay más tiempo que vida.*
   Take it easy, there is plenty of time.
9. *El que madruga, Dios le ayuda.*
   The early bird gets the worm.
10. *Más hace el que quiere que el que puede y no quiere.*
    Where there's a will, there's a way.
11. *El que no oye consejo no llega a viejo.*
    He who won't listen won't get far.
12. *No le busques tres pies al gato, porque le hallas cuatro.*
    Don't look for problems.
13. *Lo que puedas hacer hoy, nunca dejes para mañana.*
    Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.
14. *Más vale pájaro en mano que cien volando.*
    A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
15. *Más vale llegar tarde que nunca.*
    Better late than never.
16. *Entre menos burros, más elotes.*
    The fewer, the better.
17. *No te hagas boca chiquita.*
    Don't be shy at the table.

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18. *Te sumen un ojo y te sacan el otro.*
    You'll get gypped.
19. *En boca cerrada no entra mosca.*
    To keep out of trouble, keep your mouth shut.
20. *Dime con quien andas, y te diré quien eres.*
    A person's reputation is determined by the company he keeps.
21. *Con hambre no hay mal pan.*
    Nothing tastes bad when you are hungry.
22. *Cada oveja con su pareja.*
    To each his own.
23. *De tal palo tal astilla.*
    Chip off the old block.
24. *El hombre propone y Dios dispone.*
    Man proposes, God disposes.
25. *El primer pensamiento es el mejor.*
    The first thought is the best.
26. *El que no habla, Dios no lo oye.*
    He who does not speak is not heard.
27. *El que no quiere ruido que no críe cochinos.*
    Don't look for trouble if you don't want any.
28. *Juntos pero no revueltos.*
    Together but not mixed.
29. *Más vale solo que mal acompañado.*
    It's better to be alone than in bad company.
30. *Más vale malo por conocido que bueno por conocer*
    Better a known evil than an unknown good.
31. *Nadie sabe el bien que tiene hasta que lo ha perdido.*
    No one values what he has until he's lost it.
32. *No es tan bravo el león como se pinta.*
    The lion isn't as brave as he's reputed to be.
33. *Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.*
    What you don't know won't hurt you.
34. *Panza llena, corazón contento.*
    A full stomach, a happy heart.
35. *Parece que no quiebra un plato.*
    He looks as if he wouldn't hurt a fly.
36. *Pereza es madre de pobreza.*
    Laziness begets poverty.
37. *Indio comido, indio ido.*
    Eat and run.
38. *Le picó los ojos.*
    He made a fool of him.

39. *Lo barato sale caro.*
    Cheap things end up costing more.
40. *El que escupe para arriba, a la cara le cae.*
    People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
41. *El que espera, desespera.*
    He who waits gets restless.
42. *Nunca te vayas al primer impulso.*
    Look before you leap.
43. *Nadie sabe lo que trae el morral nomás el que lo carga.*
    Nobody can really know another person's troubles.
44. *El que no mira adelante, atrás se queda.*
    He who doesn't look ahead will remain behind.
45. *La mentira dura mientras llega la verdad.*
    Lies will stand until the truth is revealed.
46. *Tanto peca el que se roba la vaca como el que le detiene la pata.*
    The accomplice is just as guilty as the thief.
47. *Vale lo que pesa.*
    He is worth his weight in gold.
48. *Mira y calla.*
    Look and listen.
49. *Si no ayudas, no estorbes.*
    If you don't help, don't get in the way.
50. *No se le vaya a caer la mollera.*
    He's acting like a child.
51. *A lo dado no se le busca lado.*
    Beggars can't be choosers.
52. *Cada cabeza es un mundo.*
    Different strokes for different folks.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that old sayings truly represent folk wisdom, or do you think that for the most part they're simply silly?
2. Can you think up some proverbs reflecting your own experience in certain areas of life? Do you think you could pass on really useful advice in one short sentence?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Each of the students might be asked to write a story—with a moral—using one of the proverbs as a central theme.
2. The students might wish to collect other proverbs from their parents or other relatives. They might ask these older people if they feel some sayings in particular have helped them in their lives in specific, practical ways.

VII. Riddles - Adivinanzas

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RIDDLES—ADIVINANZAS

Note: The literal English translation for the riddles is provided, but of course many of the riddles depend on puns and word play to suggest the answer, and these are virtually untranslatable.

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1. **Baila** *pero no en la* **harina.**
   She dances but not upon the floor.
   (*Bailarina*—Dancer)

2. *Blanca como la nieve,*
   Prieta como el carbón,
   Anda y no tiene pies,
   Habla y no tiene boca.

   White as snow,
   Black as coal,
   It walks and has no feet,
   It speaks and has no mouth.
   (*Una carta*—A letter)

3. *Blanco fue mi nacimiento,*
   Me pintaron de colores,
   He causado muchas muertes,
   Y he empobrecido señores.

   At birth I was white,
   I was painted with colors,
   I have caused many deaths,
   And impoverished many men.
   (*Barajas*—Cards)

4. *Una vaca negra pasó*
   Por el mar
   Pegando bramidos
   Sin ser animal.

   A black cow bellowing
   passed over the sea
   And it is
   Not an animal.
   (*Una nube*—Thundercloud)

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5. *Una vieja,*
Larga y seca,
Que le escurre la manteca;
¿Qué es?

A tall old woman,
Dried-up stick,
Who drips fat—
What is it?

(*Una vela*—Candle)

6. **Ya ves** *que claro es,*
adivíname lo que es.

You see how clear it is,
Tell me what it is.

(*Llaves*—Keys)

7. **Tu hayá** *y yo acá.*

You over there and I over here.

(*Toalla*—Towel)

8. *Caballito de bordo en bordo*
que ni come ni bebe ni anda.

A little horse straddling bank to bank,
That doesn't eat, nor drink, nor walk.

(*Un puente*—Bridge)

9. *Entré a la iglesia*
Pisé una **grada**.
Voltié para atrás.
Y no vi **nada**.

I entered a church,
I stepped on a stair,
I turned around,
And I saw nothing.

(*Granada*—Pomegranate)

10. *Lana sube,* **lana baja**.

Wool goes up, wool comes down.

(*La navaja*—Knife)

11. **Plata no** *es,*
Oro no es,
¿Qué es?

It isn't silver,
It isn't gold,
What is it?

(*Plátano*—Banana)

12. *En un pozo muy espeso*
Está un viejo sin pescuezo.

In a very dirty hole
There is an old man with no neck.

(*Un peso*—A dollar)

13. *En u.* **monte** *está un* **rey.**

In a forest, there's a king.

(*Monterrey*)

14. *Blanca soy,*
del mar nací
ricos y pobres
se sirven de mí.

I am white,
born from the sea,
rich and poor
both use me.

(*La sal*—Salt)

15. *Cartas van y cartas vienen*
y en el aire se detienen.

Letters go and letters come
and stop awhile in the air.

(*Nubes*—Clouds)

16. **Agua** *pasa por mi casa,*
Cate *de mi corazón.*

Water passes through my house,
Katy of my heart.

(*Aguacate*—Avocado)

VIII. Tales - Cuentos

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TALES—CUENTOS

The following are some of the most popular tales in Mexican American culture. These stories have been handed down from generation to generation and have become so much a part of so many people's childhood memories and, in fact, everyday lives that they have assumed an air of authenticity and are often considered to be recountings of actual incidents. Which is understandable and very human, for everyone knows that immediacy—an "I was there and I saw it!" attitude—is extremely effective as a story-telling technique.

Ghost stories are favorites in cultures the world over, and Mexican American folklore is rich indeed in this kind of tale. The following section will give the reader at least a glimmer of the vast treasure available in this area. Fantasy is also a dominant theme in the legends of peoples from every corner of the earth, and the stories of Juan Oso take us into the realm of fantasy, a realm peopled with strange creatures, haunted by eerie happenings, sometimes overshadowed by cruelty and hardship, but also a magical place where good always prevails, right always triumphs, and the boy always gets the girl!

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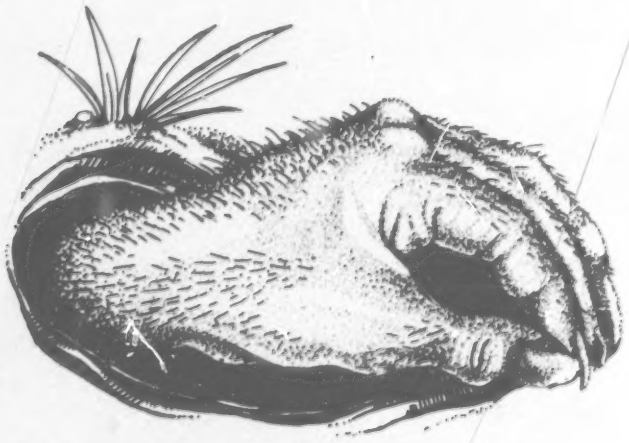
THE HAIRY HAND

It is said that a woman once dropped a baby into a hole in the ground in the middle of a playground. Later, when children approached the spot they saw a fuzzy, hairy hand coming out of the hole. When the children reached the hole, the hand disappeared. They put their ears to the hole and could hear a baby cry, but the baby was never seen again.

LA MANO PACHONA

Se dice que una vez una mujer dejó caer a un bebito en un agujero en medio de un patio de recreo. Después, cuando unos niños se acercaron a ese lugar, vieron una mano pachona, velluda, saliendo del agujero. Cuando los niños llegaron al agujero, la mano se desapareció. Pusieron los oídos al agujero y oyeron a un bebito llorar, pero el bebito nunca jamás se volvió a ver.



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THE GHOST OF WHITE ROCK

One hot July night, a young Dallas couple, having driven out and parked on the shore of White Rock Lake, switched on the headlights of the car and saw a white figure approaching. As the figure came straight to the driver's window, they saw it was a young girl in a sheer white dress that was dripping wet. She spoke in a somewhat wheedling voice.

"I'm sorry to intrude, and I would not under any other circumstances, but I must find a way home immediately. I was in a boat that overturned. The others are safe. But I must get home."

She climbed into the rumble seat, saying that she did not wish to get the young lady in the passenger's seat wet, and gave them an address in Oak Cliff, on the opposite side of Dallas. The young couple felt an uneasiness concerning their strange passenger, but they drove on. As they neared their destination, the young woman in the front seat turned toward the rumble seat to ask directions; the rumble seat was empty, but still wet.

After a brief and futile search for the girl in white, the couple went to the address she had given and were met by a man whose face showed lines of sorrow. When he heard the couple's story, the man replied in a troubled voice, "This is a very strange thing. You are the third couple who has come to me with this story. Three weeks ago, while sailing on White Rock Lake, my daughter was drowned."

EL FANTASMA DE PIEDRA BLANCA

En una noche calurosa de julio, una pareja joven de Dallas salió a dar la vuelta en el carro y se estacionó a la orilla del Lago Piedra Blanca. Al prender las luces del carro, vieron una figura blanca que se acercaba. Cuando la figura llegó a la ventanilla al lado del chofer, vieron que era una muchacha joven con un vestido blanco diáfano, casi transparente, y empapado. Les habló en una voz algo lisonjera:

—Siento mucho molestarlos, y no lo haría bajo otras circunstancias, pero necesito llegar a mi casa inmediatamente. Estaba en un barco que se voltió. Mis compañeros están sanos y salvos. Pero yo tengo que llegar a casa.

Se subió al asiento trasero descubierto, diciendo que no quería mojar a la señorita en el asiento de enfrente, y les dio una dirección en Oak Cliff, un suburbio al otro lado de Dallas. Los jóvenes sintieron una inquietud con respecto a su pasajera extraña, pero se dirigieron

a la ciudad. Cuando iban llegando a la vecindad, la joven que iba en el asiento de enfrente volvió hacia atrás para pedir que la muchacha los dirigiera; el asiento trasero estaba vacío, pero todavía mojado.

Después de una búsqueda breve y fútil por la muchacha vestida de blanco, la pareja decidió ir a la casa cuya dirección ella les había dado. Allí les abrió la puerta un hombre con la cara marcada de dolor. Cuando había escuchado lo que los jóvenes tenían que decirle, el señor les contestó en una voz preocupada:

—Esto es algo muy raro. Ustedes son la tercera pareja que han venido a mí con esta historia. Hace tres semanas, mientras navegaba en el Lago Piedra Blanca, mi hija se ahogó.

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AN HACIENDA CALLED LA ESPERANZA

A young man and a young woman met, fell in love, and decided to marry. The young man was to inherit an hacienda from his father, but he did not want it because it was haunted.

On the day of the wedding, the bridegroom's father gave the hacienda to his son, who explained that he did not want to accept it. The young wife, however, wanted it very much, and she asked her father-in-law to go ahead and give it to them. The father-in-law did so. The young man at first refused to go there to live, but the girl insisted so much that her husband finally consented.

On their way to the hacienda, the husband told his wife that he had known since he was small that there was a bedroom at the hacienda where a hand appeared in a mirror. The hand, a woman's beautiful hand, was seen as it passed across the mirror, and then a sigh was heard. The young wife laughed and said that she did not believe in such things; she added that she wanted to spend a few nights in that bedroom to see if she could hear anything for herself.

The couple arrived at the hacienda, and at nightfall it began to rain very hard. They retired to the bedroom. Suddenly they saw a beautiful hand pass in front of the mirror. Then they heard a sigh, long and full of sadness. The young wife was greatly surprised, but she told her husband, "I am going to discover what is going on."

She and her husband examined the room. Behind the full-length mirror they found a door. With great difficulty they opened it and discovered a small room. There on a table was a jewel box and a letter which read thus:

> These jewels must be given to the first child who is born in this hacienda. I was a married woman and the owner of this hacienda. We were a very happy couple until my husband was killed. The baby which I was expecting was never born. Now, just before I die, I want to ask of anyone who finds this letter that if the first child born in the hacienda is a girl, she be named Esperanza (Hope). As long as the instructions in this letter are not fulfilled, my spirit will wander over the hacienda.

The young couple went on living at the hacienda. Their first child was a little girl whom they named Esperanza and to whom they gave the jewels. The hand never appeared again, and the hacienda was always known as "La Esperanza."

LA ESPERANZA

Un hombre y una mujer joven se conocieron, se enamoraron, y decidieron casarse. El hombre sabía que iba a heredar una hacienda de su padre, pero él no la quería porque en esa hacienda pasaban cosas extrañas.

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En el día de la boda, el padre del novio le dio la hacienda a su hijo, que le explicó que no quería aceptarla. La novia, sin embargo, sí quería la hacienda muchísimo, y le pidió a su suegro que sí se las regalara. El suegro le hizo su gusto. Al principio, el novio rehusó ir a la hacienda a vivir, pero la muchacha insistió tanto que su esposo por fin accedió.

Cuando iban de camino a la hacienda, el esposo le contó a su esposa que él había sabido desde niño que había una recámara en la hacienda donde se aparecía una mano en un espejo. La mano, la mano hermosa de una mujer, se veía pasar por enfrente del espejo, y luego se oía un suspiro. La joven se rió y dijo que ella no creía en tales cosas, y anadió que deseaba pasar unas noches en esa recámara para ver si oía o veía algo para sí misma.

La pareja llegó a la hacienda, y al anochecer comenzó a llover muy fuerte. Se fueron a su recámara y se acostaron. De repente vieron una mano hermosa pasar por enfrente del espejo, y luego oyeron un suspiro, largo y lleno de tristeza. La muchacha se sorprendió mucho, pero le dijo a su marido:

—Yo voy a descubrir lo que está sucediendo.

Los dos jóvenes examinaron el cuarto. Detrás del espejo de cuerpo entero encontraron una puerta. Con gran dificultad la abrieron, y descubrieron un cuarto pequeño. Allí sobre una mesa hallaron un estuche de joyas y una carta que decía lo siguiente:

> Estas joyas deben darse a la primera criatura que nasca en esta hacienda. Yo era una mujer casada y la dueña de esta hacienda. Mi marido y yo fuimos muy felices hasta que él se mató. El niño que estaba esperando nunca nació. Ahora, antes de morirme, quiero pedir a quien encuentre esta carta un favor: si la primera criatura que nace en esta hacienda es una niña, pido que se le llame Esperanza. Mientras las instrucciones en esta carta no se cumplan, mi espíritu vagará por esta hacienda.

La pareja siguió viviendo en la hacienda. Su primer bebé fue una niña a quien le pusieron Esperanza y a quien le dieron las joyas. La mano nunca volvió a aparecerse, y la hacienda siempre llevó el nombre La Esperanza.

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THE LADY IN WHITE

Once two men were walking through an alley after midnight when they saw a gray-haired lady in a long white dress come out of a big garage. She began to walk in front of them, and when they called to her she answered, "Don't follow me," and walked even faster. As the men continued to follow her, she kept warning them not to do so.

After walking for two blocks, they came to a canal bank. The lady turned and looked at the men before she dived into the water. As she turned her head, the men saw the face of a skull. Then she vanished.

LA MUJER VESTIDA DE BLANCO

Una vez, dos hombres iban caminando por un callejón después de medianoche cuando vieron una mujer con pelo gris y un vestido largo y blanco salir de un garaje. Ella comenzó a caminar enfrente de ellos, y cuando le hablaron, les respondió, «No me sigan», y caminó más aprisa. Los hombres continuaron a seguirla, y ella continuó a advertirles que no lo hicieran.

Después de haber caminado dos cuadras, llegaron a la orilla de un canal. La mujer voltió y miró a los hombres antes de saltar al agua. Al voltear ella [illegible]beza, los hombres vieron la cara de una calavera. Luego se desapareció.

THE GHOST NUN

In the year 1945, two soldiers were going from Sinton to Corpus Christi. Somewhere along the road they were stopped by a nun who asked for a ride. As they traveled along, the soldiers talked about the war. The nun, who was riding in the back seat, spoke up and told them that the war was going to end before the year was out.

When they reached Corpus Christi, the nun asked to be left at the cemetery. The soldiers supposed that she was going to visit a grave and offered to stop and pick her up on their way back. She refused their offer, but she handed them a postcard and asked them to give it to the priest at Sinton.

When the priest read the card, he asked the soldiers if they could recognize a picture of the nun if they saw it; they said they could. The priest brought out a large book with many pictures of nuns. He turned the pages until the soldiers pointed to one of the pictures and identified it. It was the picture of a nun who had been dead for several years.

LA MONJA FANTASMA

En el año de 1945, dos soldados iban de Sinton a Corpus Christi. En el camino los paró una monja que les pidió que la llevaran con ellos. Mientras iban manejando, los soldados platicaban de la guerra. La monja, que iba en el asiento de atrás, les dijo que la guerra se terminaría antes de fin de año.

Cuando llegaron a Corpus Christi, la monja pidió que la dejaran en el cementerio. Los soldados se supusieron que iba a visitar una tumba, y ofrecieron parar y recogerla de regreso. Ella rehusó su oferta, pero les dio una tarjeta postal y les pidió que se la entregaran al sacerdote en Sinton.

Cuando el sacerdote leyó la tarjeta, les preguntó a los soldados si podrían reconocer una fotografía de la monja si se les mostraba; le contestaron que sí. El sacerdote sacó un libro grande con muchas fotografías de monjas. Volvió las páginas hasta que los soldados apuntaron a uno de los retratos y lo identificaron. Era el retrato de una monja que tenía varios años de muerta.

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A GHOSTLY BABY SNATCHER

When Señor Zartuche was a baby, he was the victim of a malicious ghost who came every night at midnight and took him out of the house into the yard. They would stay there for a few minutes; then the ghost would bring him back. Nobody knew why a spirit should behave in this manner, and nobody was able to do anything about this nocturnal occurrence.

At last his mother remembered something she had once heard: if a person assumed the shape of a cross on his bed with arms flung out wide and face turned toward heaven, he would be safe from witches. Perhaps the same procedure would make a ghost think twice about what he was doing. As a last resort, therefore, the mother got into bed with her child and, as soon as she heard the ghost coming, assumed the proper position.

The thing drew near, its fiery eyes fixed on the child, its clawlike hands extended to seize him. Then it saw the mother and drew back. "Now," she thought, "is the time to speak to it." As all Christian people know, a ghost cannot speak to a living person unless the person speaks first. She got out the right words with some difficulty. "In the name of God, what do you want?"

The ghost began to talk. It told the woman of a buried treasure in that very house. She must dig in a particular spot, and she would find first of all a saddle. Under the saddle were two earthen pots, one full of gold and the other of silver. Finally, pointing with a bony forefinger, the ghost showed her where to dig.

By this time the lady was so frightened that she fainted away with a groan that would have wrung your heart. When she came to, the ghost was gone—to return no more.

She thought of starting to dig at once, but unfortunately, when she woke from her fainting fit, she discovered she had forgotten in which corner the treasure was buried. She began to dig anyway, with her family helping her, but none of them found the saddle nor the gold and silver under it.

Some time later, a man heard the story and decided to try his luck. He dug deeper than anybody else, and there was the saddle! He pulled the rotted article out, and beneath it were the two earthenware pots. But do you suppose there was any gold or silver in them? Of course not! Everybody knows that the person to whom the ghost points out the location of the buried treasure is the only one who can find it. In this case, the two pots were full of charcoal.

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EL SECUESTRADOR FANTASMA

Cuando el señor Zartuche era bebito, fue la víctima de un fantasma malicioso que venía todas las noches a medianoche y lo sacaba de la casa al patio. Allí permanecían por unos minutos; luego el fantasma lo regresaba a su cuarto. Nadie sabía por qué un espíritu se portaba de esta manera, y nadie sabía qué hacer para prevenir este acontecimiento nocturnal.

Por fin su madre se acordó de algo que había oído: si una persona tomaba la forma de una cruz en su cama, acostándose con los brazos extendidos y la cara voltiada hacia el cielo, estaría protegida contra las brujas. Quizá el mismo procedimiento haría que un fantasma, también, pensara muy bien de lo que estaba haciendo. Por lo tanto, como último recurso la madre se acostó en la cama con su niño y, tan pronto como oyó que el fantasma venía, tomó la posición apropiada.

El aparecido se acercó a la cama, sus ojos ardientes clavados en el niño, sus manos como garras alargadas para cogerlo. Entonces vio a la madre y se retiró un poco. «Ahora», ella pensó, «es el momento en que tengo que hablarle». Como saben todos los cristianos, un aparecido no puede hablarle a una persona viva a menos que la persona le hable primero. Con dificultad, pudo decir las debidas palabras:

—En el nombre de Dios, ¿qué es lo que desea?

El fantasma comenzó a hablar. Le dijo a la mujer que había un tesoro enterrado en esa misma casa, y que ella debería escarbar en un lugar determinado. Primero encontraría una silla de montar; bajo la silla de montar estaban dos ollas de barro, una llena de oro y la otra de plata. Por fin, apuntando con un dedo índice huesudo, el fantasma le enseñó dónde escarbar.

Para este tiempo la señora estaba tan asustada que se desmayó con un quejido que le hubiera retorcido el corazón a cualquiera. Cuando volvió en sí, el fantasma se había desaparecido—para nunca más volver.

Pensó en comenzar a escarbar inmediatamente, pero, desafortunadamente, cuando volvió en sí de su desmayo, descubrió que se le había olvidado en cuál rincón estaba enterrado el tesoro. Sin embargo comenzó a escarbar, con la ayuda de su familia, pero no lograron hallar ni la silla de montar ni el oro y la plata debajo de ella.

Pasó el tiempo, y un día un hombre oyó la historia y decidió probar su suerte. Escarbó a un nivel más profundo de lo que habían llegado los demás, ¡y allí estaba la silla de montar! Sacó la pieza podrida, y debajo de ella halló las dos ollas de barro. ¿Pero se imagina que en ellas había oro o plata? ¡Seguro que no! Todo mundo sabe que cuando un fantasma le indica a alguna persona dónde hay tesoro enterrado, sólo esa persona puede hallar ese tesoro. En este caso, las dos ollas estaban llenas de carbón.

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THE WEEPING WOMAN

A long time ago, there was a woman who had two children. She did not love them, so she mistreated them and neglected them. The children were always hungry and cold.

When the woman became tired of them, she decided to get rid of them. She took them to the deepest part of a canal and pushed them in to drown.

And that is why sad laments are now heard near running water. It is said that the woman now cries for her children and for the terrible act she committed. Many people in the Valley say that they have heard these cries. Some have tried to follow the sound, but to this day no one has been able to find out where the cries come from.

Note: This is one of the many versions that abound concerning the same basic theme—the drowning of young children and the distraught mother's eternal grief at their loss.

LA LLORONA

Hace muchos años, había una mujer que tenía dos niños. Como ella no los quería, los maltrataba y no los cuidaba. Los niños vivían con hambre y siempre tenían frío.

Cansada de sus hijos, la mujer decidió deshacerse de ellos. Los llevó a la parte más honda

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de un canal, y allí los empujó al agua y se ahogaron.

Y es por eso que donde hay agua corriente se oyen tristes llantos. Se dice que esa mujer ahora llora por sus hijos y por el mal que hizo. Mucha gente en el Valle dice que ha oído esos llantos. Algunas personas han tratado de seguirlos, pero hasta hoy, nadie ha podido descubrir de dónde vienen esos lamentos.

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THE STRANGE LADY

There is a girl in the Valley whose father is a farmer who raises cotton and corn. The girl remembers a strange lady who used to come into her father's fenced fields year after year when they were harvesting corn. There was no gate at the end of the field, but the lady came through the fence as if it were not there, frightening the workers. The lady picked corn, but she never spoke to anyone.

During cotton season, the pickers in the field sometimes heard the rattling of a chain, but they could not see anyone. After the noise stopped, they could see the lady walking by. She used to walk to the end of the field and sit on top of a huge sunflower plant.

On the southern outskirts of Pharr, a woman dressed in white was seen standing by an old ebony tree in the morning, over a period of time. If the woman was not by the tree, people would see two huge white dogs fighting under the ebony tree. It was said that money was buried under that tree. The woman and the dogs continued to be seen until someone dug

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near the tree and found the money. After that, neither the woman nor the dogs were ever seen again.

Note: Obviously stories of strange ladies doing strange things are not at all unusual in ghostly lore. These are just two versions of the popular theme.

LA MUJER EXTRAÑA

Hay una muchacha en el Valle cuyo padre es un agricultor que cultiva el algodón y el maíz. La muchacha se acuerda de una mujer extraña que solía entrar a las labores cercadas de su papá año tras año cuando estaban cosechando el maíz. No había puerta a fines de la labor, pero la mujer pasaba por la cerca como si no estuviera allí, asustando a los trabajadores. Ella recogía el algodón, pero nunca le hablaba a nadie.

Durante la temporada del algodón, los recogedores en la labor a veces oían el matraquear de una cadena, pero no podían ver a nadie. Cuando el ruido cesaba, veían a la mujer pasar. Ella caminaba a los fines de la labor y se sentaba arriba de un enorme mirasol.

En las afueras al sur de Pharr, una mujer vestida toda de blanco se veía por la mañana al lado de un viejo árbol de ébano, durante un largo período de tiempo. Si la mujer no estaba al lado del árbol, entonces la gente veía a dos enormes perros blancos peleándose debajo del árbol. Se decía que había dinero enterrado debajo de ese árbol de ébano. La mujer y los perros se siguieron viendo hasta que alguien escarbó cerca del árbol y encontró el dinero. Después de eso, ni la mujer ni los perros se volvieron a ver jamás.

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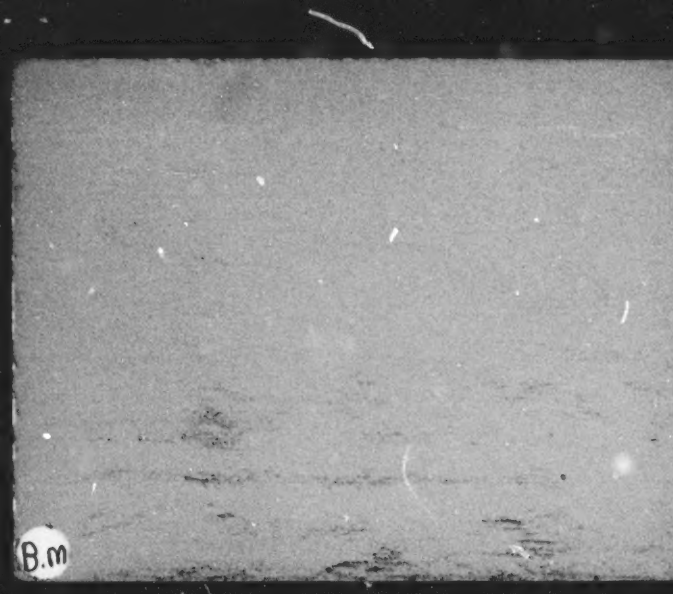
THE GHOSTLY STAMPEDE

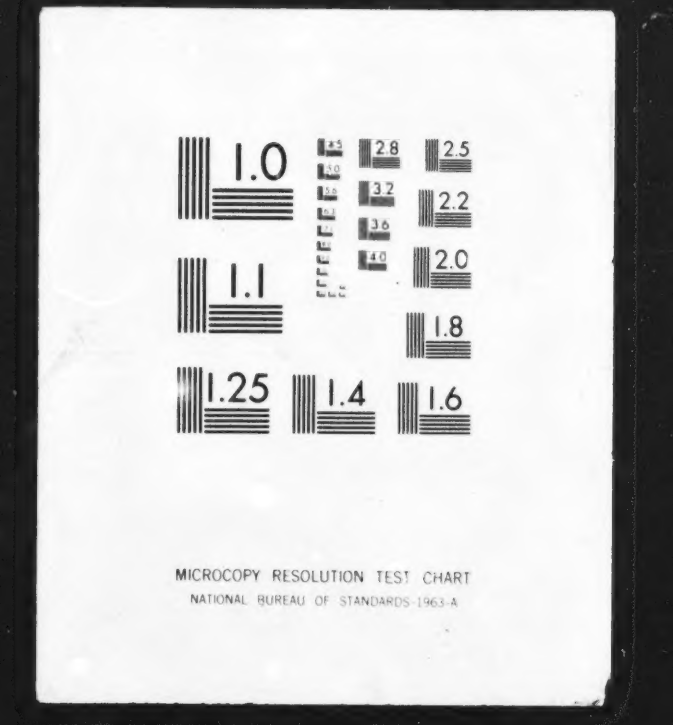
Many people used to go to Hebronville to hunt for buried treasure, for there was a rumor that a great deal of money had been hidden in the ground there. Whenever people began to dig, however, they were frightened by a huge stampede of cattle, horses, covered wagons, and people. This ghostly stampede of what appeared to be animals and people—but was in reality nothing more than phantoms—frightened most of the diggers into fainting or running away. A few brave people, however, kept on in spite of the stampede, and eventually all the money was dug up. As the amount of buried treasure grew less and less, and finally dwindled to nothing, the ghostly stampede gradually disappeared and was seen no more.

LA ESTAMPIDA FANTASMA

Mucha gente iba antes a Hebronville a buscar tesoro escondido, pues habían rumores que mucho dinero se había enterrado por allí. Pero cuando la gente comenzaba a escarbar, una gran estampida de ganado, caballos, carretones y personas la asustaba. Esta estampida fantasma de lo que parecía ser animales y gente—pero en realidad no era más que una ilusión—asustaba a la mayoría de los escarbadores tanto que se desmayaban o huían. Pero algunas pocas personas valientes seguían con su trabajo a pesar de la estampida, y con el tiempo se encontró todo el dinero. Al disminuir el tesoro, la estampida fantasma se fue desapareciendo, y cuando ya no quedó nada del tesoro, la estampida nunca jamás se volvió a ver.

Juan Oso





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THE ADVENTURES OF JUAN OSO

I.

Once upon a time, in a dense and dark forest, there lived a man named Juan Oso. He was called this because he was half-bear, half-man: from the waist down, he was a bear, and from the waist up, he had a human body. He lived in a cave and wore animal-skin clothing.

One day, as he was looking for something to eat, he heard someone crying. He followed the sound until he came upon a woman, and it was she who was sadly crying. When she saw Juan Oso, she was so frightened that she began to run, but she was so tired that she soon stopped. Juan Oso followed her and, when he overtook her, told her not to be frightened because he wouldn't hurt her. The woman told the strange creature that her name was Rosario and that she was lost. A few days earlier, she had gone into the woods to get some young tender cactus, and she hadn't been able to find her way out. Juan Oso told Rosario not to worry and assured her that he would help her find the way home.

Rosario and Juan Oso walked for a long, long time. Finally they came to the edge of the forest. Rosario was so grateful for his help that she invited him to live at her home.

Rosario's husband was very happy to see her, but he became frightened when he saw Juan Oso. When her husband didn't allow the creature to live with them, Rosario took him to the parish priest. Since the priest was very kind, he took Juan Oso to live with him. He sent Juan Oso to school, but the children mocked him, so he stayed home and worked around the church.

Juan Oso stayed with the priest for many years, until one day he became bored and decided to go back into the forest. The priest wanted to pay him for his work, but Juan Oso wouldn't take any money. He told the priest that all he needed was an iron staff. The priest got him the staff, and Juan Oso left the following day.

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LAS AVENTURAS DE JUAN OSO

I.

Había una vez que en un monte tupido y obscuro vivía un hombre llamado Juan Oso. Así se llamaba porque era mitad oso, y mitad hombre: de la cintura para abajo era oso, y de la cintura para arriba era hombre. Vivía en una cueva y usaba ropa de cuero.

Un día mientras buscaba que comer, oyó un llanto. Se fue siguiendo el ruido, y por fin llegó a donde estaba una mujer llorando muy tristemente. Cuando vio a Juan, la mujer se asustó tanto que comenzó a correr, pero estaba tan cansada que de pronto no pudo correr más. Juan Oso la siguió, y cuando la alcanzó, le dijo que no tuviera miedo, que él no le iba a hacer ningún daño. La mujer le dijo al ser extraño que se llamaba Rosario y que andaba perdida. Unos días antes, había entrado al monte para cortar nopalitos, y no había podido encontrar como salirse. Juan le dijo a Rosario que no se preocupara, y le aseguró que él le ayudaría a hallar el camino a su casa.

Rosario y Juan comenzaron a caminar, y al mucho tiempo llegaron a la orilla del monte. Rosario estaba tan agradecida que Juan la había salvado que lo invitó a vivir en su casa.

¡Qué gusto le dio al esposo de Rosario cuando la vio! Pero cuando vio a Juan Oso, le dio mucho miedo. No aceptó que viviera él con ellos. Por lo tanto, Rosario llevó a Juan Oso con el sacerdote de la parroquia. Como el sacerdote era muy bueno, se llevó a Juan para que viviera con él. Mandó a Juan Oso a la escuela, pero los niños le hacían mucha burla y no quiso seguir yendo. Prefirió quedarse en casa y trabajar en la iglesia.

Juan Oso permaneció con el sacerdote por muchos años, hasta que un día se aburrió de estar allí y decidió que quería regresar al monte. El sacerdote quiso pagarle por todo su trabajo, pero Juan no quiso aceptar dinero de él. Le dijo a su buen amigo que sólo quería un bastón de fierro, y el sacerdote se lo consiguió. Al día siguiente, Juan Oso se despidió del sacerdote y se fue de allí.

II.

Juan Oso walked a long, long time. One day he came upon three men who had also left home. They decided to travel together.

After a while, they saw many animals fighting over a dead cow. When the animals saw Juan, they decided to ask him to divide the cow equally among them. When he had finished doing so, an ant told him that she had not gotten her share. The cow's head had been left over, and Juan Oso gave her this to eat and told her to save the skull for a house.

The animals were very grateful that Juan Oso had settled their quarrel. As a token of their appreciation, they each gave him a claw, except the ant, who gave him one of her legs. Juan was told that whenever he wanted to become another creature, all he had to do was hold that

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creature's claw or leg in his hand and say "God and eagle," or "God and ant," or whichever creature he wanted to be. Juan's companions laughed and asked him what he would do with the claws. He replied that perhaps someday he might put them to good use.

II.

Juan caminó mucho, mucho tiempo, y un día se encontró con tres hombres que también se habían ido de sus casas. Todos decidieron seguir su camino juntos.

Al poco tiempo, divisaron muchos animales que estaban peleándose por una vaca muerta. Cuando los animales vieron a Juan Oso, decidieron pedirle a él que repartiera la vaca para que todos alcanzaran partes iguales. Cuando Juan había terminado de hacer esto, una hormiga le gritó que ella no había alcanzado nada. Todavía quedaba la cabeza de la vaca, y Juan se la dio a la hormiga y le dijo que guardara la calavera para usarla como casita.

Los animales estaban tan agradecidos que Juan había resuelto su altercación que cada uno de ellos decidió darle una de sus uñas, y la hormiga una de sus piernitas. Le dijeron que cuando quisiera transformarse en un animal, todo lo que tenía que hacer era tener en su mano la uña o la piernita del animal y decir, «Dios y águila», o «Dios y hormiga». Los compañeros de Juan se rieron de él y le preguntaron para qué quería todas esas uñas de animales. Juan les contestó que quizá algún día se ofrecería usarlas.

III.

Juan Oso and his companions set out in search of work in order to support themselves. They soon found jobs at a nearby farm. They appointed one of their number to do the housework and cooking while the others worked in the fields.

The cook started early in order to have dinner ready by noon. At 12:00 noon on the dot, a dark man dressed all in black appeared. It was the devil! He threw the food on the floor and tore the tortillas into pieces. After he had finished destroying everything, he left. A while later, the men came home to eat. When Juan Oso asked for the food, the cook said, "A dog came in and destroyed everything, but I will quickly prepare more."

It was decided that someone else should be in charge of preparing the noon meal the following day. When the new cook had everything ready, the man in black again appeared and again destroyed everything. When the men came to eat, again there was no food for them. Juan Oso was so angry that he decided *he* would stay home the next day.

At exactly 12:00 noon that following day, as Juan finished preparing dinner, in walked the man in black. Juan Oso hit him with his iron staff and knocked off an ear. "Give me back my ear," said the devil. But Juan would not do so until the man had promised to come to his aid if the need ever arose. The man told him that whenever he needed his help, all he had to do was bite the magic ear and he would appear. He warned him not to give the ear to anybody else. Then the man left, leaving a trail of blood behind.

III.

Juan Oso y sus compañeros decidieron buscar trabajo para mantenerse. Dentro de poco lo encontraron en una granja cercana. Nombraron a uno de ellos para que se quedara en la casa para limpiar y cocinar mientras los demás trabajaban en las labores.

El cocinero comenzó a preparar la comida temprano para tener todo listo para mediodía. A las doce en punto se apareció un hombre vestido todo de negro. ¡Era el diablo! Aventó la comida al suelo y rompió las tortillas en pedacitos. Cuando había terminado de destrozar todo, se fue. Al poco rato llegaron los hombres a comer. Cuando Juan Oso pidió la comida, el cocinero le dijo:

—Pues un perro se metió y destrozó todo, pero prontito voy a hacer más.

Se decidió que otro hombre se encargaría de preparar la comida el día siguiente. Cuando el cocinero nuevo tenía todo listo, el hombre vestido de negro otra vez se apareció y otra vez destruyó todo. Cuando llegaron los hombres a comer, otra vez no había comida para ellos. Juan Oso se enojó tanto que decidió quedarse él mismo en casa el día siguiente.

A las doce en punto ese día, al momento que Juan estaba acabando de preparar la comida, se apareció el hombre vestido de negro. Juan Oso le pegó con su bastón de fierro y le arrancó una oreja. «Devuélveme mi oreja», dijo el diablo. Pero Juan rehusó hacerlo hasta que el hombre prometió ayudarle si alguna vez fuera necesario. El hombre le dijo que cuando necesitara ayuda, todo lo que tendría que hacer era morder la oreja mágica y él aparecería. Le advirtió que no le fuera a dar la oreja a nadie. En seguida el hombre se fue, dejando atrás un rastro de sangre.

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IV.

The next day, Juan Oso followed the trail of blood for a long time. Soon he became very tired. He took out the eagle's claw and said, "God and eagle." Instantly he was transformed into an eagle and flew—continuing to follow the trail of blood—until he came to a cave. There he hid in a tree outside the entrance to the cave and waited. At noon, the man in black appeared. When Juan saw this, he decided to come back later and investigate to find out what was going on.

On his way home from the cave, Juan Oso came upon a little house in the woods where a poor old woman lived with her daughter. He resumed his normal form of half-man, half-bear, and since he wanted to be near the cave, he asked the old woman for the job of goatherd. She told him, "The job is yours if you agree to accept food instead of money as pay." Juan Oso agreed that his salary was to consist of coffee and tortillas.

The daughter told Juan not to let the goats stray to the grassy shore of a nearby lake. An ogre who lived in the lake might eat the goats.

At the first opportunity, Juan Oso took the goats to the edge of the lake in spite of the warning. When the old woman saw what he had done, she began to weep. She told her daughter that she feared that Juan and the goats were gone forever.

When the ogre saw Juan Oso with his iron staff, however, it did not come close but merely watched from a distance. Juan returned to the old woman's house and asked her to tell him about the ogre. She told him that the ogre had taken three princesses to a cave and that the youngest princess was very, very beautiful.

"No one in the entire kingdom has had the courage to face the ogre," said the old woman. "Each princess has a guard. One guard is a bull, another a monster with seven tongues, and the third is a man without a soul." Juan Oso asked why he was called that, but the old woman didn't know. She then suggested that since Juan Oso was so brave, he should be the one to find out. Juan then said his farewells to the old woman and her daughter and returned home with some cheese and a young goat they gave him.

IV.

El día siguiente, Juan Oso siguió el rastro de sangre por un largo tiempo. Dentro de poco se sintió muy cansado. Sacó la uña del águila y dijo, «Dios y águila». Al instante se convirtió en un águila y voló—todavía siguiendo el rastro de sangre—hasta que llegó a una cueva. Allí se escondió en un árbol cerca de la entrada a la cueva y se esperó. A las doce, se apareció el hombre vestido de negro. Al ver esto, Juan decidió regresar más tarde para averiguar qué había allí.

De regreso, Juan Oso se encontró con una casita en el monte donde vivía una pobre viejecita con su hija. Se transformó a su forma normal de mitad hombre, mitad oso, y, como quería estar cerca de la cueva, le pidió a la viejecita trabajo de pastor de cabras. Ella le dijo que sí le daba el trabajo, pero que no podía pagarle con dinero, solamente con sus comidas. Juan Oso accedió que su sueldo consistiría de café y tortillas.

La hija le dijo a Juan que no dejara que las cabras se fueran a comer pasto a la orilla de un lago cercano. En ese lago vivía un ogro que se las podía comer.

Aprovechando la primera oportunidad que se le presentó, Juan Oso llevó a las cabras al lago, a pesar de la advertencia. Cuando la viejecita vio lo que había hecho, comenzó a llorar. Le dijo a su hija que temía que Juan y las cabras estaban perdidos para siempre.

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Pero cuando el ogro vio a Juan con su bastón de fierro, no se acercó sino que solamente lo miró de lejos. Juan regresó a la casa de la viejecita y le pidió que le contara del ogro. Ella le platicó que el ogro se había llevado a tres princesas a una cueva y que la princesa más joven era muy hermosa. «Nadie en todo el reino ha tenido el valor para enfrentarse con el ogro», dijo la viejecita. «Cada princesa tiene un guardia. Uno de los guardias es un toro, otro es un monstruo con siete lenguas y el tercero es un hombre sin alma». Juan Oso preguntó por qué le decían así, pero la viejecita no sabía. Le sugerió que puesto que Juan Oso era tan valiente, quizá él debería ser el que averiguara eso. Entonces Juan se despidió de la viejecita y su hija y se regresó a su casa con unos quesos y un cabrito que le regalaron.

V.

When Juan Oso got home, his companions were very glad to see him. They told him that the man in black had returned in search of his ear.

The following morning, Juan left very early to look for the man in black and the cave he had seen earlier. He thought that this might be the cave where the three princesses were imprisoned. On his way, he gave thought to how he might manage to enter the cave without being seen.

When he reached the cave, he remembered the claws the animals had given him. He held the ant's leg in his hand and said, "God and ant," and he was transformed into an ant. He was then able to enter the cave, which was very dark and very deep.

Juan walked and walked until he came to the place where the elder princess was being guarded by a sleeping bull. He then resumed his normal body and asked the princess how she had gotten there. She told him that one day she and her two sisters had gone on a picnic and had gone swimming in the lake. The ogre had captured them and brought them to the cave. Their father, the king, was in mourning, as he thought his daughters had drowned. Juan Oso asked her where the others were, and she replied that they were in another part of the cave. She warned Juan to beware of the monster with seven tongues.

Juan turned himself into an ant again and went searching for the second princess. When he found her, he became Juan Oso again and frightened the young woman. He then asked her about her younger sister (he had not liked either one of the two he had met so far). He was told that the man without a soul was her guard and that he never let her out of his sight.

Juan Oso resumed the shape of an ant and went to look for the third princess; when he found her, he transformed himself into his own half-man, half-bear form again. The princess and the creature fell in love at first sight. Juan promised that he would return for her and her sisters. As a token of love for him, she gave him her crown, a handkerchief, and her ruby ring.

Before leaving, Juan Oso told her to ask the guard on the following day why he was called the man without a soul. Juan said he would assume the shape of an ant and climb on her hand so that he would be able to hear the man clearly when he explained. With this, Juan took his leave of the princess.

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V.

Cuando Juan Oso llegó a su casa, sus compañeros lo recibieron con mucho gusto. Le dijeron que el hombre vestido de negro había vuelto en busca de su oreja.

La mañana siguiente, Juan salió muy temprano para buscar al hombre vestido de negro y la cueva que había visto anteriormente. Él pensaba que quizá ésta sería la cueva donde estaban encarceladas las tres princesas. Durante su caminata, Juan meditó sobre cómo iba a poder meterse a la cueva sin que lo vieran.

Al llegar a la cueva, Juan se acordó de las uñas y la piernita que traía. Tomó la piernita de hormiga en su mano y dijo, «Dios y hormiga», y se transformó en hormiga. Entonces pudo entrar a la cueva, que estaba muy obscura y era muy honda.

Juan caminó y caminó hasta llegar al lugar donde un toro durmiente montaba guardia sobre la princesa mayor. En seguida volvió a tomar su forma normal y le preguntó a la princesa cómo había llegado ella a estar allí. Ella le respondió que un día ella y sus hermanas habían ido en día de campo y se habían metido en el lago a nadar. El ogro las había capturado y traído a la cueva. Su padre, el rey, estaba de luto, pues creía que sus hijas se habían ahogado.

Juan Oso le preguntó dónde estaban las otras dos hermanas, y ella le contestó que estaban en otra parte de la cueva. Le advirtió a Juan que se cuidara del monstruo con siete lenguas.

Juan se convirtió en hormiga otra vez y se fue a buscar a la segunda princesa. Cuando encontró, tomó de nuevo su forma de mitad hombre, mitad oso, y le dio un gran susto a la muchacha. Luego le preguntó acerca de su hermana menor (no le habían gustado las dos que había conocido hasta entonces). Ella le dijo que el hombre sin alma era el que cuidaba a esa princesa y que él nunca la dejaba sola.

Juan Oso tomó otra vez la forma de una hormiga y se fue en busca de la tercera princesa; al encontrarla, se volvió a su forma normal de nuevo. La princesa y el hombre-oso se enamoraron a primera vista. Juan le prometió que volvería por ella y por sus hermanas. Como prenda de su amor, la princesa le dio su corona, un pañuelo y su anillo de rubí.

Antes de irse, Juan Oso le pidió a la muchacha que le preguntara al guardia el día siguiente por qué se le decía el hombre sin alma. Juan dijo que como hormiga, se subiría en la mano de la princesa para poder oír al hombre claramente cuando le diera su explicación. Con esto, se despidió de la princesa.

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VI.

The next day Juan Oso returned to the cave, where his true love awaited him. As an ant, he climbed on the young woman's hand, and she walked over to her guard and asked him why he was called the man without a soul. He laughed and told her, "You are the first woman to ask that question. I am going to tell you the reason, since you'll never get out of here alive."

The man explained that though he had his body, the ogre that lived in the lake had his soul. If the ogre was killed, a hare would appear; if the hare was killed, a dove would appear; if the dove was killed, an egg would appear. "By then I will be near death, and if the egg is broken on my head, I will die," he concluded.

Juan Oso was very happy to hear this. He told the princess that he had to go away for a while but would soon come back to rescue her and her sisters.

Juan then went to the old woman's house and took the goats near the lake again. He hid behind some trees, and when the ogre came out, Juan hit him with his iron staff. The ogre

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kicked and groaned but wouldn't die, so Juan Oso took out the lion's claw. He said, "God and lion," and instantly was transformed into a lion. He was then able to kill the ogre.

When the ogre was dead, a hare came out, running wildly, so Juan turned himself into an eagle and killed it; out came a dove, and he also killed it; out rolled an egg, and he caught it.

Juan Oso then returned to the old lady's house to tell her and her daughter the good news. He assured them that there was no longer anything to fear, because the ogre was dead. The two women were overjoyed, and the daughter kissed him gently and offered him a cup of wine so he could join them in celebrating their good luck.

VI.

El día siguiente, Juan Oso regresó a la cueva donde lo esperaba su amor. En forma de hormiga, se subió en la mano de la princesa, y ella se acercó a su guardia y le preguntó por qué se le decía el hombre sin alma. El se rió y le respondio:

—Tú eres la primera mujer que me hace esa pregunta. Te la voy a contestar, puesto que nunca saldrás de aquí viva.

El hombre le explicó que aunque él tenía su cuerpo, el ogro que vivía en el lago tenía su alma. Si alguien matara al ogro, saldría una liebre; si se matara la liebre, aparecería una paloma; si se matara la paloma, aparecería un huevo. Terminó por decir:

—Para entonces yo estaría muy enfermo y en agonía, y si alguien quebrara ese huevo en mi cabeza, me moriría.

Juan Oso se alegró mucho al oír esto. Le dijo a la princesa que tenía que irse por un rato pero que pronto volvería para salvar a ella y a sus hermanas.

Juan entonces se dirigió a la casa de la viejecita y otra vez se llevó a las cabras a la orilla del lago. Se escondió detrás de unos árboles, y cuando salió el ogro, Juan le pegó con su bastón de fierro. El ogro comenzó a patalear y a gemir, pero no se moría, así que Juan Oso sacó la uña de león. Dijo, «Dios y león», y en un instante se transformó en forma de león. Entonces ya pudo matar al ogro.

Cuando el ogro había muerto, salió una liebre corriendo alocadamente, así que Juan se convirtió en un águila y la mató; en seguida se apareció una paloma, y Juan también la mató; luego salió un huevo rodando, y Juan Oso lo pescó.

Entonces el hombre-oso se regresó a la casa de la viejecita para darle a ella y a su hija las buenas noticias. Les aseguró que ya no tenían nada que temer, pues el ogro había muerto. Las dos mujeres recibieron la noticia con júbilo, y la hija le dio un dulce beso a Juan y le ofreció una copa de vino para que él las acompañara en su celebración de su buena suerte.

VII.

After saying good-bye to the old woman and her daughter, Juan Oso wrapped the egg carefully in a handkerchief and went back to the cave. He first killed the bull with a great blow to the head which made his horns fall off. He then killed the monster with seven tongues. He cut out all of the seven tongues and put them in his pocket. After that, he went on to the part of the cave where the man without a soul was dying. When Juan Oso broke the egg on his head, the man without a soul died immediately.

Since the cave was very deep, Juan Oso could not get the princesses out by himself. So he went home to ask his friends to help him. When they reached the cave, Juan asked one of his companions if he would go down while tied to a rope. Juan told him that if he became frightened, all he had to do was jerk the rope three times and they would pull him out.

The man hadn't gone down very far when he gave the signal to be pulled up. So another man went down, but the same thing happened, as he also was very frightened. The third companion went farther down than the other two, but after a while he gave the signal and he too had to be pulled out.

Juan Oso was the only one left, and he pretended to be very frightened also. As his three companions lowered him into the cave, they tried to take away his iron staff, telling him that it was too heavy for him to carry. But he refused to give it up. As he descended deeper and deeper into the cave, his companions kept exclaiming, "How very deep he's going! What courage! We might never see him again!"

VII.

Después de despedirse de la viejecita y su hija, Juan Oso envolvió el huevo con mucho cuidado en un pañuelo y se regresó a la cueva. Primero mató al toro, con un golpe muy fuerte a la cabeza que le tumbó los cuernos. Luego mató al monstruo con las siete lenguas. Le cortó todas las lenguas y se las puso en el bolsillo. Después de eso, se dirigió a la parte de la cueva donde se encontraba el hombre sin alma, que ya estaba agonizando. Al quebrarle Juan Oso el huevo en la cabeza, el hombre sin alma murió inmediatamente.

Como la cueva era muy honda Juan Oso no podía sacar a las princesas él solo. Así que regresó a casa para pedir a sus amigos que le ayudaran. Cuando llegaron a la cueva, Juan le pidió a uno de sus compañeros que bajara amarrado a una cuerda. Le dijo que si le daba miedo, solamente tenía que darle tres estirones a la cuerda y sus compañeros lo sacaban.

No había bajado larga-distancia el hombre cuando dio la señal que lo sacaran. Así que otro hombre bajó a la cueva, pero pasó la misma cosa, pues a él también le dio mucho miedo. El tercer compañero bajó más hondo que los otros dos, pero después de un rato él también dio la señal y a él también lo tuvieron que sacar.

Juan Oso era el único que quedaba, y él fingió también estar muy asustado. Al bajarlo a la cueva, sus compañeros trataron de quitarle su bastón de fierro, diciéndole que estaba muy

pesado para que lo cargara. Pero él rehusó dárselos. Mientras bajaba más y más hondo, sus compañeros se decían:

—¡Qué hondo va bajando! ¡Qué valor de hombre! ¡A lo mejor nunca lo volveremos a ver!

VIII.

Soon Juan Oso jerked on the rope and sent up the first princess. One of the men said, "This one is for me." Then came out the second princess, and another man said the same thing, "This one is for me." Finally, the third and most beautiful princess came out. The third companion said, "And this one is all mine." But she answered, "No, no—I love only Juan Oso." Upon hearing that, the companions became angry and pulled out the rope, leaving Juan Oso in the cave.

Juan Oso was not very worried until he realized that he had lost the animals' claws. Now he couldn't transform himself into an ant in order to crawl out of the cave.

VIII.

Al poco tiempo, Juan Oso le dio un tirón a la cuerda y mandó a la primera princesa para arriba. Uno de los hombres dijo:

—Ésta es mía.

Luego salió la segunda princesa, y otro de los hombres dijo lo mismo:

—Ésta es mía.

Por último, salió la tercera y la más hermosa princesa. El tercer compañero dijo:

—¡Y ésta es toda para mí!

Pero ella le contestó:

—¡No, no! Yo amo solamente a Juan Oso.

Al oír esto, los compañeros se enojaron y sacaron la cuerda, dejando a Juan en la cueva.

Juan Oso no se preocupó mucho hasta que se dio cuenta que había perdido las uñas de los animales. Ahora ya no podía transformarse en hormiga para salir de la cueva.

IX. CONCLUSION

Meanwhile, the three men had taken the princesses to the palace. The king was so happy to see his daughters that as a reward he gave the men a huge sackful of gold. He thought that they had been the ones who had rescued the princesses.

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While this reunion was going on in the palace, Juan Oso sat in the cave thinking of his princess. Suddenly he remembered the magic ear. He took it out and gently bit it. The man in black appeared and asked, "What do you desire, Master?" Juan Oso answered, "I want you to get me out of here."

Juan's wish was granted on the instant. The man left him on a road near the palace where a celebration was going on. Juan met a street vendor and asked him the reason for the celebration. The vendor told him that there was much rejoicing because some gentlemen had rescued the three princesses who had been lost for some time. Two of the princesses were getting married that very day. The youngest princess would not marry until her jeweled crown was returned. The vendor added, "Many young men have brought crowns, but she has refused them all."

Juan Oso told the vendor that he also had a crown. He asked, "Will you please take this crown and show it to the princess?" The vendor, being very humble, was hesitant to go, since he was dressed in rags. But when Juan Oso showed him twenty pesos, he quickly accepted.

When the vendor arrived at the palace with the crown, the princess was called to see it. As soon as she laid eyes on it, she exclaimed joyfully, "This is my crown! Where did you get it? I want to see the man who gave it to you."

The king told the vendor to bring the man to the palace. When Juan Oso arrived, the princess told her father that he had been the one that had saved her and her sisters. The king then asked Juan for proof that he was the real hero. The creature showed him the seven tongues, the handkerchief, and the ruby ring.

The king forgave the two men who had married his daughters but punished the third one. Then Juan Oso bit the magic ear once more. When the man in black appeared, he asked Juan, "What is your wish, Master?" Juan Oso replied, "I wish to become a normal man. If you grant this, I shall return your ear." Instantly, Juan was transformed into a tall, handsome young man.

Juan and the beautiful princess were married and lived happily ever after.

IX. CONCLUSIÓN

Mientras tanto, los tres hombres habían llevado a las princesas al palacio. Al rey le dio tanto gusto al ver a sus hijas que como recompensa les regaló a los hombres un gran costal lleno de oro. Él creía que ellos habían sido los quienes habían salvado a las princesas.

Mientras esta reunión se llevaba a cabo en el palacio, Juan Oso estaba sentado en la cueva pensando en su princesa. De repente se acordó de la oreja mágica. La sacó y suavemente la mordió. El hombre vestido de negro se le apareció y le preguntó:

—¿Qué desea, amo?

Juan Oso le respondió:

—Quiero que me saques de aquí.

El deseo de Juan se le cumplió al instante. El hombre vestido de negro lo dejó en un

camino cerca del palacio, donde estaban teniendo una gran celebración. Juan se encontró con un vendedor y le preguntó la razón por la celebración. El vendedor le contestó que había mucho regocijo porque unos caballeros habían salvado a las tres princesas que habían estado perdidas por algún tiempo. Dos de las princesas se iban a casar ese mismo día. La princesa menor rehusaba casarse hasta que se le devolviera su corona de joyas. Añadió el vendedor:

—Muchos jóvenes le han traído coronas, pero no ha aceptado ninguna.

Juan Oso le dijo al vendedor que él también tenía una corona. Le preguntó:

—¿Me harías el favor de llevar esta corona y mostrársela a la princesa?

El vendedor era un hombre muy humilde, y no quería presentarse en el palacio vestido en garras. Pero cuando vio el billete de veinte pesos que Juan Oso le ofreció por hacerle ese favor, aceptó rápidamente.

Cuando el vendedor llegó al palacio con la corona, llamaron a la princesa para que la viera. Al verla, ella exclamó con alegría:

—¡Ésta es mi corona! ¿Dónde la conseguiste? ¡Quiero ver al hombre que te la dio!

El rey mandó al vendedor a que trajera a ese hombre al palacio. Cuando Juan Oso llegó, la princesa le dijo a su padre que él era el que la había salvado a ella y a sus hermanas. El rey entonces le pidió a Juan una prueba que él era el héroe verdadero. El hombre-oso le mostró las siete lenguas, el pañuelo y el anillo de rubí.

El rey perdonó a los dos hombres que se habían casado con sus hijas, pero castigó al tercero. Luego Juan Oso mordió la oreja mágica otra vez. Cuando se apareció el hombre vestido de negro, le preguntó a Juan:

—¿Qué desea, amo?

Juan Oso le respondió:

—Quiero ser un hombre normal. Si me concedes esto, te devolveré tu oreja.

Al instante, se transformó Juan en un joven alto y guapo.

Juan y la hermosa princesa se casaron y vivieron muy felices por el resto de sus vidas.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe in ghosts? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever seen or heard anything that you felt could not be explained rationally?
3. If something unexplainable did happen to you—maybe the kind of thing that happened to the young couple in the story "The Ghost of White Rock"—what do you think your reaction would be? Would you tell other people of your strange experience, or would you be afraid they would consider you crazy? If a friend told you about such an experience, would you consider him or her crazy?
4. Do you enjoy hearing or telling stories of the supernatural? Do you like riding on a roller coaster? Why do you suppose that so many people seem to enjoy getting scared?
5. Do you enjoy fantasies and fairy tales? Why do you think these have a universal appeal?
6. In such stories, fictional characters' magical powers enable them to get out of tough spots easily. Do you think that just reading about these exploits makes people feel less helpless themselves? Do you think it makes them feel better when somebody else, at least, has power over unpleasant circumstances?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. The students might want to do research on ghost stories in general, ghost stories from a particular country, or ghost stories centered around a specific theme.
2. You might want to encourage discussions on the nature of superstition and the function of fantasy.
3. You might ask the students to collect ghost stories from parents, grandparents, and other relatives, especially those that are "personalized" ghost stories, where the person telling the story claims it actually happened to him/her or to somebody he/she knows personally.

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